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#238 | 11-2025

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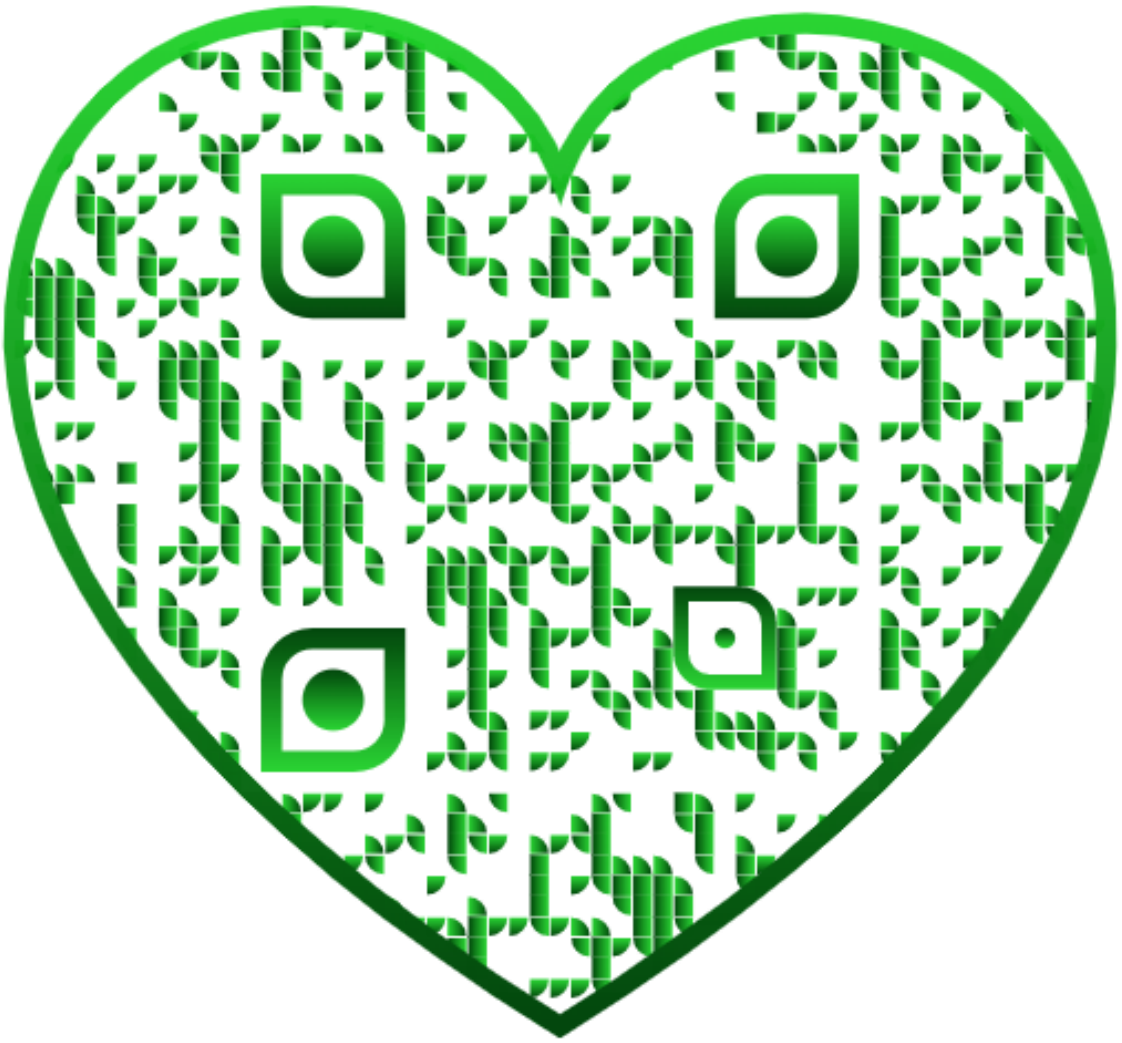

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“Hip-Hop needs no one"

. . . but people need hip-hop" – as Fünf Sterne Deluxe once said. Apparently, this fits in every sense, because according to current statistics, people in Germany stream almost**80% German rap, followed by around 10% techno**and a colorful mix as the rest. So are there any other relevant musical styles?

And even the first part of the quote can now become reality thanks to artificial intelligence, as services like SUNO only generate A few keywords of dark rap “straight from the street” – in German and with the typical crude gang slang, and even the lyrics are included.**So does hip-hop really no longer need people?**

Just to let you know in advance: Things aren't quite that futuristic yet. In the current Masterclass, we delve into this very topic on 29 pages and show, on the one hand,**where and how AI actually helps in producing hip-hop**and on the other hand, how to learn lyrics, build trap beats and**composed a complete song from start to finish**. By the way, all producers will get their money's worth here, because the techniques demonstrated can easily be adapted to genres beyond hip-hop.

And if that’s not enough techno for you: In this month’s podcast we have none other than **Anfisa Letyago as guest**, one of the most successful DJs on the scene, who not only shines with her own productions but also shares a lot of her techniques in conversation. A listen is a must.

Marco Scherer
Editor-in-Chief BEAT

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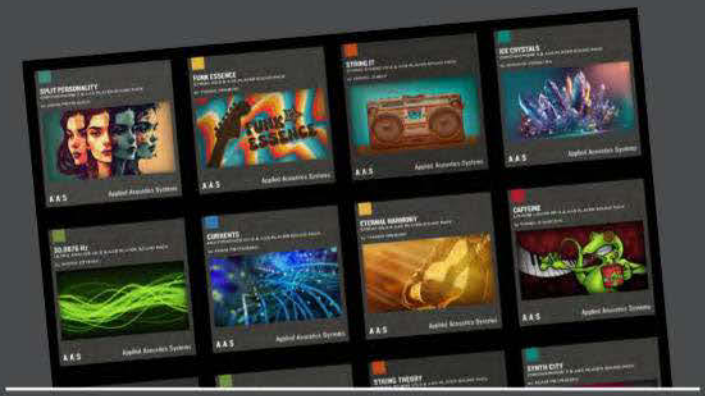

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This month, Applied Acoustics Systems is rewarding you twice! Two sound instruments of your choice await you – packed with inspiration for your next tracks. And the selection is gigantic: Choose from 78 packs – whether it's fat vintage synths, trendy club sounds, experimental modular sequences, or otherworldly soundscapes. Your next musical adventure begins here.

Download: see page 9 | Info:applied-acoustics.com win | mac

7 plug-ins for epic ambient, lo-fi & soundscapes

Sampleson Sonic Explorer Bundle

Seven plug-ins. One goal: inspiration for original tracks. This software highlight from our friends at Sampleson gives you all of that: The Sonic Explorer Bundle features analog drums in the style of the legendary Roland TR-808, an expressive electric piano, a drawbar organ, an ingenious one-button synth, and three distinctive effect plug-ins for sound shaping. Look forward to seven sleek and distinctive instruments and effects for tracks that need edge, texture, and atmosphere.

Download: see page 9 | Info: sampleson.com win | mac

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78 hypnotic rhythms & soundscapes

Earthen Rituals

Earthen Rituals blends hypnotic, trance-like bells and organic percussion with constantly evolving pads. This creates a unique sonic palette—from crystalline clouds to angular, insect-like textures—that blends artificial soundscapes with an organic, wooden feel. Always in motion, always rhythmic. This is what infinity sounds like! To simplify experimentation and creating your own sound rituals, all patch combinations are also included as individual sounds!

Download: see page 9 | More packs: zamplersounds.com Windows | Mac

Beat Magazine Software #238

Over 11 GB of valuable plug-ins and samples for download

Two instruments of your choice from AAS are available as full versions. Whether fat vintage synths or exciting modular sequences, how about bombastic club sounds? Plus, there are seven epic instruments from Sampleson as a highlight of the issue.

Hypnotic rhythms, organic percussion, and breathtaking soundscapes are hidden in our "Earthen Rituals" expansion pack for our Zampler and Akai's current MPC series. Experiment with unique textures and dive into infinity – 78 patches for your perfect sound design!

Fat beats are the focus of our sound archive this month: This reader pack contains 377 sizzling drum loops, plus powerful MPC beats from the 90s. Diverse breakbeats and fodder for dark trap productions are also provided.

Content compiled by the Beat editorial team

Algoriffix Pitch Perfect

Pitch Perfect by Algoriffix is an innovative voice-to-MIDI plugin powered by AI technology that allows you to transcribe sung melodies into MIDI in real time. It features pitch detection, scale and note tracking, harmonization, pitch bend, and low latency, as well as direct file conversion from WAV, MP3, or AIFF to MIDI files.

Download: see page 9 | Info: algoriffix.com win I mac

ISIVISI Audio Slurp

Experimental dynamic textures are the strengths of the FM synthesizer Slurp, which are created by rotating modulation axes.
The three axes X, Y and Z can be individually adjusted in terms of octave, phase and modulation intensity to create innovative ambient sounds.

Download: see page 9 | Info: isivisi.ca/slurp win I mac I linux

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REX and SFZ player with mod matrix & parameter sequencer

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Masterful convolution reverb with legendary H90 reverbs

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With the new K20 series, Kurzweil brings the legendary VAST engine back into the spotlight.**Page 70**

Portrait:Raz Ohara

The Danish musician presents Memories Of Tomorrow, an electronic album full of craftsmanship: All synths were recorded live. The analog, slightly imperfect charm

combines electronica with influences from soul, trip-hop, downbeat and ambient.
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Choose freely from 78 packs!
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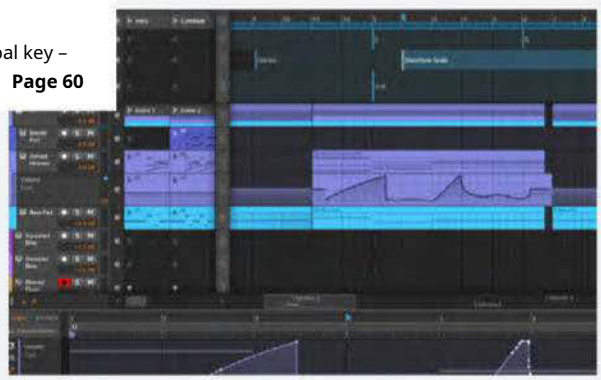
Latest news on
www.beat.de

Test:Behringer MS-5

With the MS-5, Behringer has once again revived a vintage synthesizer at an affordable price. We tested whether Behringer has managed to bring the special character of the Roland SH-5 into the modern era.**Page 73**

Test:Bitwig Studio 6

New look, revised modulations, global key – what an update! **Page 60**



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The common thread: Issue 11/2025

For many years, Beat has inspired its readers not only with practical, musical topics, but above all with the close integration of editorial content. From the very beginning, Beat has been about making, with the structured development of ideas, and with a common thread – both in the magazine and in the tracks. This navigator shows you the highlights of this issue and provides a glimpse into the bigger picture.

Masterclass: Hip-Hop Production

Write lyrics, build a beat, record vocals... done? Hip-hop sounds simple at first. But if the result is to be authentic and contain your signature sound, things get more complex. In this masterclass, we'll show you the entire recording process – including mastering – using a complete song production, from beatmaking to release. You'll also learn how to write crisp lines, record and stage vocals, which tools will support you in beatmaking, how to legally circumvent sample clearance, and ultimately how to make money from it. Vocals, song templates, and copyright-free samples are included.**From page 12**

Review: Behringer MS-5

With the MS-5, Behringer is once again resurrecting a vintage synthesizer at an affordable price. We tested whether Behringer has managed to bring the special character of the now half-century-old Roland SH-5 into the modern age.**Page 73**

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Portrait: Raz Ohara

Danish musician Raz Ohara looks back on a long career in various genres and bands. On his new self-titled album, "Memories Of Tomorrow," he places great emphasis on craftsmanship, as every synth was recorded live. This analog charm and imperfection create a more human electronic album that blends influences from soul, trip-hop, downbeat, and ambient alongside electronica.**Page 46**

Review: Kurzweil K2061/K2088

Kurzweil has been a fixture in the keyboard world since the early 90s. With the new K20 series, the Americans are bringing their legendary VAST engine back into the spotlight – with new features and plenty of processing power. Fans are already cheering! What sets the "new" synths apart from other synths? We reveal it in our review...**Page 70**

Beat

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Magazin

Facts | Opinion | News | Products

by Carl-Philipp Schmeller

Mobile recording on eight tracks with Zoom H6studio handheld recorder

H6studio is Zoom's new mobile recorder. It combines F-Series preamps with extremely low self-noise (-127 dBu EIN), 32-bit float resolution with dedicated gain controls, and large X/Y microphones (19.4 mm, up to 140 dB SPL), all of which ensure high-quality audio recordings. Its robust, portable design makes it ideal for both studio and outdoor use, for example, in field recording. The recorder can record up to eight tracks simultaneously at up to 192 kHz. The shock-absorbing microphone capsules ensure interference-free sound on the go. Depending on the recording situation, Various microphone attachments can be used. There will even be a wireless module in the future. Connections include four XLR/jack combo sockets with phantom power. There's also a stereo mini jack connection. MicroSD cards up to 2 TB can be used for direct recording.

Potential clipping is prevented by the internal look-ahead limiter. The H6studio is available starting at €449 and will ship in the fourth quarter of this year.

zoomcorp.com

More on the topic

PSI Audio A236 D-REX: Precise bass extension for the studio

PSI Audio introduces the new A326 D-REX loudspeaker, developed especially for demanding sound professionals. This is not a traditional subwoofer, but rather a dynamic range extender for the A226 MAIN main monitors. The D-REX does not extend the frequency range downwards, but rather improves dynamic precision and transparency in the range from 20 Hz to 100 Hz. With three 10-inch drivers, it is precisely matched to the A226—both in phase and frequency response—and forms a seamless full-range system with up to 126 dB SPL peak. Thanks to uncompromising neutrality, the sound remains consistent even when combined with other PSI models.

nitors, which is particularly beneficial for immersive setups. Like all PSI Audio products, the D-REX is handcrafted in Switzerland, individually calibrated, and delivered with a custom measurement curve. The result is a high-precision tool for demanding sound creators, Combines true bass pressure with precise reproduction – without the typical "subwoofer sound." The A326 D-REX is available for pre-order now for €9,473 plus VAT.

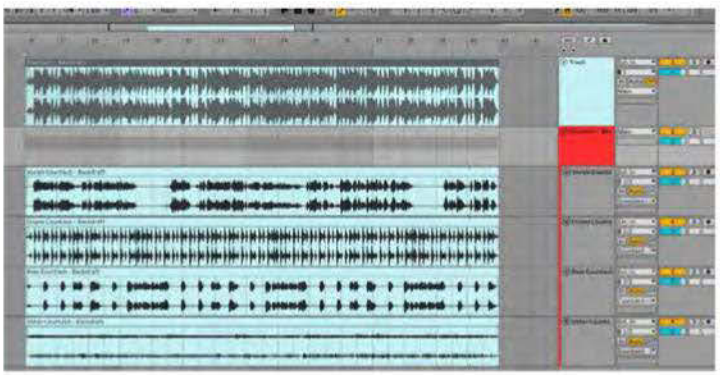
psiaudio.swiss | audiowerk.eu

More on the topic

Ableton Live with Splice, Stem Separation, A/B States for Devices and Group Bounce

With the 12.3 update, Ableton is launching important new features for its DAW. These include Native Stem Separation in Live Suite and Push 3 Standalone. This allows you to create tracks in Splitting vocals, drums, bass, and other tracks is easy. No cloud, no per-track fees. For DJs who want to combine a cappella with instrumental drum grooves, production becomes even more flexible.

The Splice integration update now allows you to browse your Splice library directly in Live, with tags/ compatibility that make dragging and dropping loops and one-shots significantly less fiddly. New



Bounce Groups and Paste Bounced Audio are also available. These allow you to bounce entire groups including effects and paste the rendered audio directly into Insert any track or take lane. Great for techno/trance arrangements and for committing sound design to hip-hop tracks.

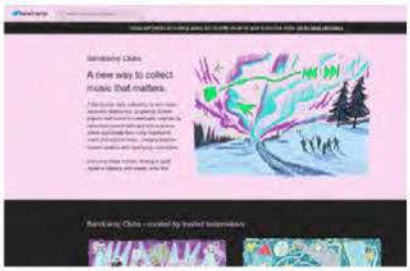
Other new features include A/B states for devices to switch between two states on-the-fly, as well as the more intensive modulation with car Pan tremolo.

ableton.com

More on the topic

Common

Discover music with Bandcamp



With the new Bandcamp Clubs, Bandcamp introduces an innovative concept that focuses on collaborative music discovery.
Instead of relying on algorithms, experienced curators hand-pick an album, which each member receives permanently in their collection on the first day of the month. This is complemented by exclusive interviews, contributions in the members' area, and a monthly live listening party where fans can engage in real-time conversation. The clubs celebrate the album as an art form and combine community, discovery, and direct artist support. Every contribution benefits not only the artists but also the curators. At launch, four clubs are available to choose from: The Hard Stuff (heavy music – from underground to cult), Kosmos Klub (adventurous, experimental sounds), Jazz-ish Jazz Club (jazz gems), and Dance Around the World (global genre diversity). With Bandcamp
Clubs are creating a more conscious, communal alternative to the algorithm-driven music world. Learn more at Bandcamp.

bandcamp.com

More on the topic

Mastering with AI help by iZotope

iZotope has introduced the new mastering suite Ozone 12 for all mixing and mastering engineers. This suite is said to be characterized by innovative AI improvements that allow users strengthen, rather than replace them. The revised Master Assistant now offers a "Custom Flow" – you select specific modules, LUFS target values, and genre presets. This makes AI your creative co-pilot, not a restrictive default. With Stem EQ, Bass Control, and Unlimiter, there are now three AI modules. The Stem EQ processes vocals, bass, drums, and instruments individually directly in the stereo master, without accessing individual tracks. Bass Control improves the bass range for more transparency in any monitor setup. The Unlimiter allows you to undo overcompressed music. This should restore masked transients and dynamics. Last but not least, the existing Maximizer received a new limiter algorithm with IRC 5 for more loudness.
mus. Ozone 12 is now available in three versions: Elements (for 59 euros), Standard (for 239 euros), and Advanced (for 539 euros).

izotope.com

More on the topic

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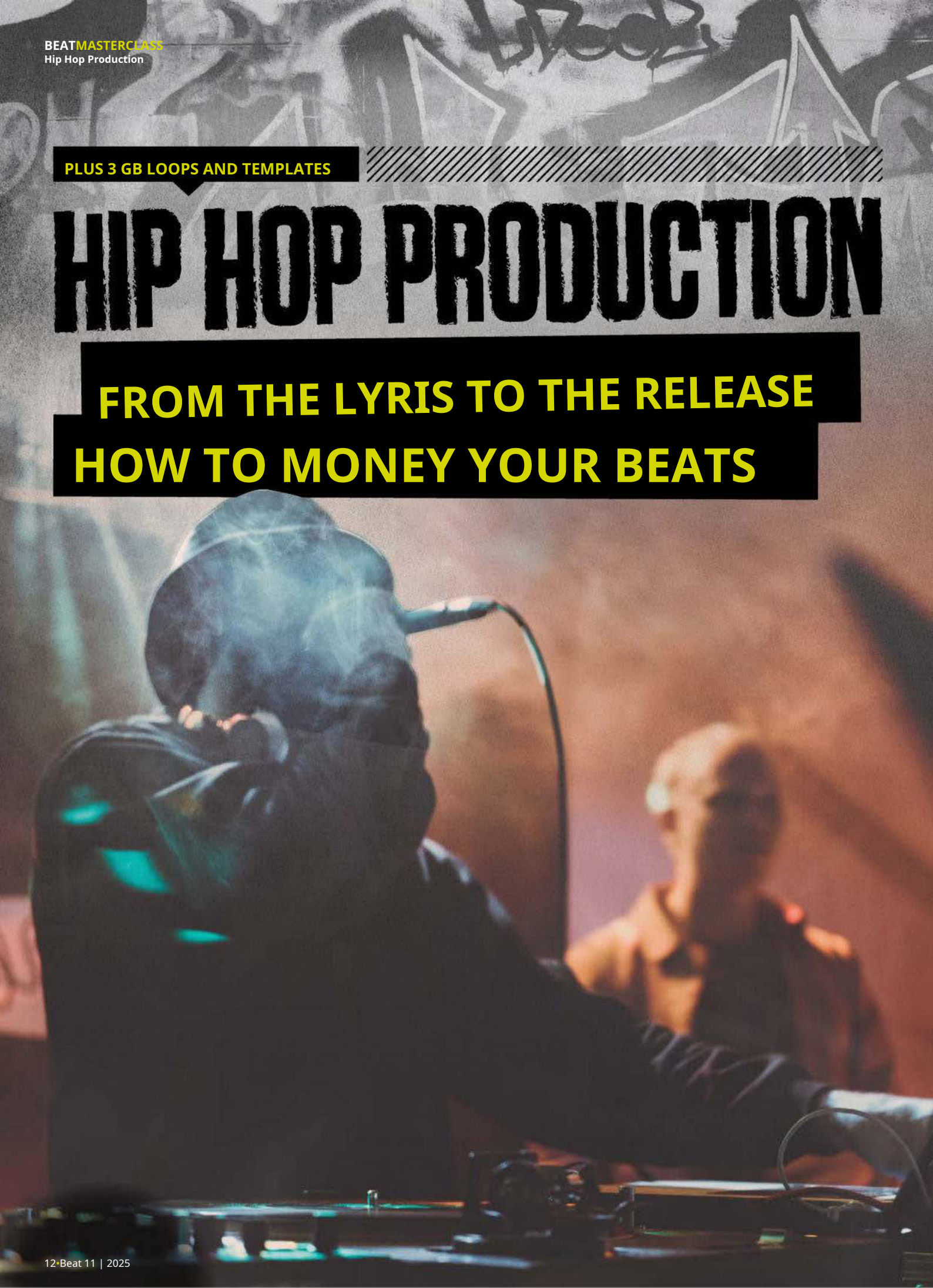

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by Christoph Strauß, Vera Schumacher, Elijah Hussock, Julian Schmauch, Harald Wittig, Tobias Fischer, Marco Scherer

It's the year 1973. The USA is in the midst of social and economic change. Unemployment and the associated poverty have been rising for years. The Black community is particularly affected. In New York, many welfare recipients are housed in the already impoverished borough of the Bronx. Violence, crime, and drugs are part of everyday life here. Desperate homeowners set their properties on fire in the hope of receiving insurance compensation. In the midst of the chaos, Jamaican-born Clive Campbell throws a block party on August 11th, where he plays under his stage name DJ Kool Herc. Unlike other DJs, he doesn't just play songs, but combines loops of two different tracks – a process known as beat juggling. With this party and this DJ technique, he laid the foundation for hip hop that evening.

The genre quickly gained popularity. Minorities used it as a mouthpiece to convey socially critical messages.

DJ Kool Herc laid the foundation for hip-hop over 50 years ago. Image: Bigtimepeace / Wikimedia Commons

and to share their experiences in the ghettos of America. In 1979, the Sugarhill Gang released the single "Rapper's Delight," which sold over eight million copies worldwide. With the first major commercial successes, more and more record companies and labels became interested in hip-hop.

Hip-Hop in Germany

American soldiers stationed in Germany popularized the combination of spoken word over groovy beats here. Despite commercial success in the US, the local scene had to first develop and establish itself. The group Die Fantastischen Vier achieved their breakthrough in the 1990s with their single "Die Da?!", although they received considerable criticism for their ironic lyrics. In 2001, the label Aggro Berlin was founded, dedicated to hard-hitting and provocative street rap. Its artists included Sido, Fler, Bushido, B-Tight, and Kitty Kat, who had a lasting impact on German rap.

Reached the mainstream

As hip-hop/rap steadily gained popularity and became commercial, production techniques and styles also evolved. There are now over 20 subgenres, including trap, drill, cloud rap, gangster rap, and boom bap. Beatmakers have long since ceased to be a derided niche group, but are serious creatives whose productions have a lasting impact on the music world.

Hip-hop/rap has been the most successful and most listened-to genre for years. A study by Skoove and Datapulse Research showed that almost three-quarters of German artists successful on Spotify are hip-hop/rap artists. You can find more information about the study on the last page of this masterclass.

Hard beats, emotional vocals

In our masterclass, we explain how you can easily produce bangers yourself. Over 15 pages, you'll learn how to find the right sounds and produce a song – from building hard

Sido is one of the most successful German rappers, here at Carstival Mannheim 2020. Image: Sven Mandel / CC-BY-SA-4.0

From drum loops to composing catchy melodies to arranging a track. And of course, vocals are a must. With our writing tips, you'll write meaningful lyrics with the perfect flow. And with our vocal chain, you can take your recording to a professional level in just a few simple steps, projecting the emotions and message onto the listener.

Earn money with beats

A question many beatmakers surely ask themselves is: How can I make money with my instrumentals? We've addressed this question and present you with three beat marketplaces where you can easily offer and sell your work online. You'll also get an overview of the features, licensing models, and costs so you can choose the solution that's best for you.

And with that, have fun with the Hip-Hop Masterclass!

Hands-on: Rap Lyrics Made Easy

6 tips for better texts

Hardly any other genre places such a strong emphasis on lyrics as hip-hop. In addition to complex rhyme chains, engaging themes, and thoughtful comparisons, flow is also an important aspect for impressing your audience. With these six tips, you'll be able to take your lyrics to a new level—promised!

1 Theme and message

Before you start writing a text, you should Make a statement about a topic or message. Consider what you want to talk about—be it personal experiences, social issues, or emotions. A clear topic will give your lyrics structure before you even start writing. The ultimate challenge is to tell a complete, coherent story with your song. A good example is the track "99 Problems" by Jay-Z.

For example, in the second verse, he recounts an experience when he was stopped by the police for allegedly speeding and resisted a search of his vehicle. One of the most famous and probably best examples of storytelling in rap is "Stan" by Eminem.

Here, he raps from the perspective of a morbid fan who writes him letters that (initially) go unanswered, ending in tragedy. In this song, Eminem raps from the perspective of the fan and as himself—a true masterpiece.

2 Be authentic

This tip may not seem like a tip for better writing at first glance, but we promise that your writing will improve if you write about your experiences and adventures.
Be honest and authentic. Your listeners will be more likely to identify with your words if they feel like you're speaking from personal experience. You might remember the final rap battle in the movie "8 Mile." Here, "B-Rabbit," aka Eminem, manages to win the audience over by revealing the truth about his opponent. He had posed as a gangster with a criminal past, but he never came to the scene.
in truth, he came from a fairly wealthy background, including private schooling. The audience took offense at this lie so badly that B-Rabbit ultimately won the battle. If you didn't have a bad childhood, don't write about it; if you didn't sell drugs, don't write about it. Find topics that reflect what you really experienced. Write about your last breakup, your car, or your love for your mother. Feelings are best put into words when you know how they feel. Simply put, how can you write lyrics about homesickness if you've never left your house? When it comes to writing lyrics, you can create something positive out of your worst experiences and feelings, move people and make them think—and who knows, maybe one day your pencil will get an entire stadium singing along.

3 Text structure and rhyme scheme

Rap lyrics often follow one or more rhyme schemes that make the lyrics catchy. Experiment with different rhyme patterns, to give your song an interesting sonic dynamic. The best teachers are those who are good at what they teach. This also applies to hip-hop songwriting. Find rappers you like best and analyze their lyrics. Try to recognize rhyme structures, analyze metaphors and similes, and apply them to your songs. Also, try to find multi-syllable rhymes instead of monosyllabic ones, place rhymes not only at the end of the line, and create a common thread.

4 Metaphors, similes and puns

A metaphor, simply put, is a linguistic device in which a word or expression is transferred from its original context to another. It sounds complicated, but it isn't. Metaphors are a great tool for making your rap lyrics more interesting. Try to package the emotions your song conveys into new linguistic images. For example, let's say you're writing a lyric to express your sadness about a certain experience. To reinforce this sadness and make your lyrics more compelling, you could use metaphors like these:

I cry tears of blood

My path is full of stones and shards, I can't move forward

My tears fill an ocean in which I'm drowning

My heart is made of stone, it's been heavy since you left

Get creative and find ways to express yourself differently than most people would. Locate the word you want to describe, for example, "distance." Now find things that are far away or represent long distances, such as clouds, the sun, the desert, or planets. For example, you could express the distance from one another like this: "I've been living on a different planet than you for a long time."

Comparisons can make your lyrics even more interesting. Make sure to choose comparisons you haven't heard others use. It can actually be quite fun to come up with your own. Many rap fans agree that Kollegah is one of the best German rappers. Below, we've selected some of his best rhymes, comparisons, and puns, highlighting the rhymes in color:

“Yeah, the boss is wearingDesignercoats/
The best designers arethehisCoats“

(Kollegah - Taj Mahal coca session)

"I'm driving inpicturebeautifulFerrari rum/
You usually chill in the evening in front of yourSigntoadsterrarium“

(Kollegah - Outro)

“I do my work with ease, like a web designer.”

(Kollegah – Legends)

“No one beats him (Kollegah) when it comes to punchlines, as if he were Abel”

(Kollegah – King)

Okay, that takes a bit. It's all about the sound of the words. So, in addition to "no one strikes," "Cain slays" can also be understood. From this, The sentence “Cain kills Abel” is then given, as it is in the biblical story te stands. Wow!

5 Rhythm and flow

Rap is heavily rhythm-based. Make sure you deliver your lyrics with a good flow that fits the beat of the song. The flow is Simply put, it's the ability to rhythmically shape rhymed language. Use conscious accentuation and try to develop your own vocal color. A good way to improve your flow is to improvise over a drum loop. Mute all tracks of the beat except the drums and try to respond to them with your lyrics. Don't always start rapping on the 1; put words on intermediate counts and try to convey the feeling of the song through your rap. Pauses are a great tool for creating tension. Experiment with different accentuations and tempos to find your own individual style. Another approach is improvisation. Just let the instrumental play on a loop and rap whatever comes to mind, and don't forget to press record. It doesn't matter whether something rhymes or not, whether it sounds good or not, or whether it makes sense or not. Often, after a while, meaningless babble develops into a flow that leads to a whole verse, a catchy hook, or even an entire song. Incidentally, well-known musicians like Post Malone and Ufo361 also often use this technique.

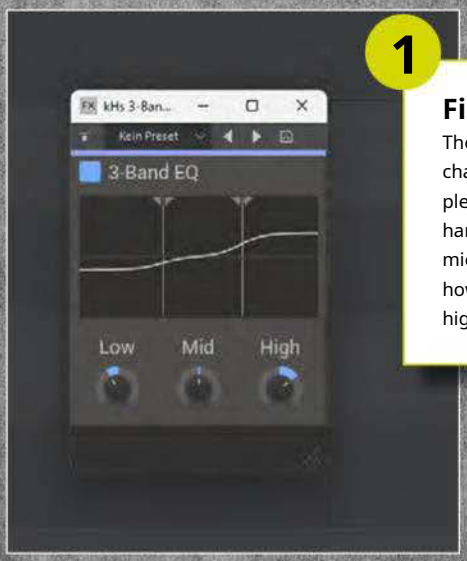
6 Rhymes as much as you can!

The most important tip is: Write as much as you can and rap as much as you can to improve your skills. To be a good rapper, To be successful, you have to gain experience through constant practice and incorporate this experience into your songs. Revise your lyrics and rap them over and over again until you are really happy with it. You will be surprised at how your track improves over time if you really take the time to fine-tune the result. Let your imagination flow and pay attention to the details in your surroundings. Everyday observations can often serve as inspiration and give your lyrics a unique touch. You can also improve your skills at any time in everyday life. Start freestyling in your head - while shopping, at work, or on the way there. Go to the produce section of the nearest supermarket and look for a rhyme for every fruit and vegetable you can find there. During your next car ride, look for rhymes for places and street names. When you're waiting for the plane on your next vacation, look for rhymes for the different countries on the display board. By rhyming so much, your brain will soon have built up a large vocabulary of rhymes, just waiting to be used. Pumuckl would have made a killer rapper, anyway.

Record professionally

The ultimate hip-hop Vocal Chain

A good-sounding vocal chain makes the difference between a raw recording and a professional mix. In hip-hop, the vocals are the most important factor in a song. With targeted steps, you can transform a simple track into a professional vocal sound. Here's how it works, step by step.



1 First EQ

The first EQ forms the foundation of your vocal chain. The goal is to make the voice clear and pleasant to hear, without it sounding boxy or too harsh. The settings will vary depending on the microphone and room acoustics. In most cases, however, it's recommended to slightly boost the highs and slightly reduce the low frequencies.

2 Frequency EQ

Vocal recordings often produce unwanted frequencies. You can remove these with a little fine-tuning. To do this, boost certain frequencies significantly and listen to whether they sound harsh or unpleasant. Then reduce these frequencies. Even if the difference is subtle, this step makes the work of subsequent plug-ins much easier.

3 Main equalizer

With the main EQ, you can make significant adjustments that will significantly shape the character of your vocals. Especially for rap vocals, it's recommended to boost the highs for more clarity and presence. At the same time, slightly lower the lower mids to prevent the sound from sounding boxy. This allows your voice to cut through the mix.

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2gHgGa5huQ
[2] https://www.wonderlandmagazine.com/2025/05/23/kitschkrieg-dre-six-interview/; [3] https://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/kitschkrieg

4

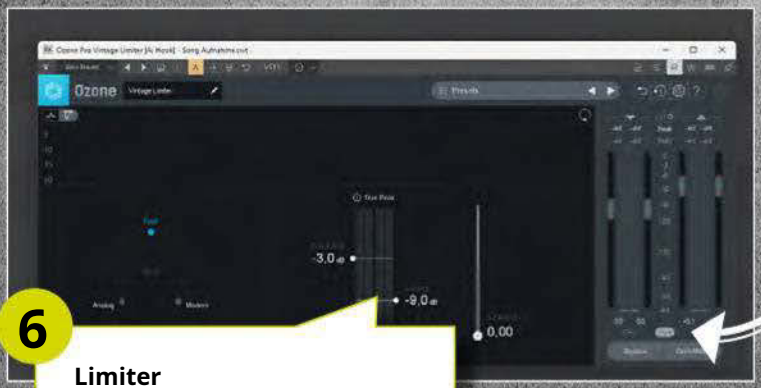
compression

With compression, you control the dynamic range of your vocals so that loud parts remain controlled and quiet parts aren't drowned out. Set the attack and release fast, choose a medium ratio, and set the threshold at around -15 dB. This will give you direct, powerful vocals—ideal for fast rap with clear articulation.

5

De-esser

Because you've boosted the highs significantly, annoying "s" sounds can become more pronounced. To compensate for this, use a de-esser. This specifically reduces the sharp frequency peaks that occur especially in "s" sounds. Set the threshold to about -10 dB for a frequency range above 5 kHz to achieve a clean result.



6

Limiter

If you record too close to the microphone, your vocals can quickly become too loud—or even unusable. A limiter allows you to limit the volume to a manageable level. The point at which it kicks in depends on the microphone, the gain settings, and your recording style. The closer you record, the higher you need to set the limiter.

7

AutoTune

When you think of rap, AutoTune is a must. The plug-in analyzes your voice and automatically adjusts it to the appropriate pitch. If you set the speed and transition very low, you'll get the typical robotic effect. If you choose higher values, the correction will sound softer and more natural, while still maintaining a clean pitch.

8

FX

Last but not least, effects are a must for vocals. In classic hip-hop, you use them sparingly to keep the raw voice clearly in the foreground. In trap or cloud rap, on the other hand, a noticeable reverb is common, especially in the hooks, while a subtle delay adds depth and richness to the overall sound.

EXTRA TIPS

For ad-lib vocals, you can use a telephone effect by cutting high and low frequencies and slightly boosting the mids, along with plenty of reverb.

Successful doubles are often created by taking multiple recordings, panning them left and right, adjusting the volume, and removing the reverb if necessary.

Beatmaking Tutorial: Creating a Trap Drum Loop

Drums à la Future, RIN & Co.

Trap is one of the most successful subgenres in hip-hop. Instead of its dark American street scene origins, we now associate it with deep 808s, fast hi-hats, and dark melodies.
Want to know how to build the classic trap drum loop?
We'll show you how!

Project info:

Material: NI Komplete Kontrol, Drum Samples
Time required: 20 minutes
Contents: Create your own trap drum loop from drum samples
Difficulty: Medium

Audio demo

1 Rolling hi-hats

To begin with, you place the **Basic framework** your drum loop with short **Trap hi-hats,** which in **thirty-second time** The pace is usually between **120** and **160 BPM** To create more tension for the entire beat, add **Double-time hi-hats** that look like small **Rolls** and are often placed at the beginning or end of the loop.1

2 In-your-face kick

The choice of kick is crucial, because together with the 808 it determines the **Punch** of your beat. If you have a **quieter** Vibe, you should have a **light kick** without strong saturation. If your beat **aggressive** should work, choose a **hard, powerful kick**. When selecting samples, your sense of sound is what counts most.1

3 Simple claps

In trap, unlike in many other genres, you usually **Claps** instead of snares. It is best to choose a short clap with **strong compression** and place it exactly between the beats. For more variety, you can also add a clap at the end of the loop, an eighth note before the end of the last bar, to create tension.1

4 Ghostnotes

Many producers stop at this point, but this is where things really get exciting. The basic framework of your drums is in place, now come the details. **Ghostnotes** are **additional hi-hats or claps**, the **quieter** than the main tracks and the groove **more lively** To do this, place a clap an eighth note after the first and third bars.1

5 Percussion

For percussion, **Rimshots**, short **Rims**, which are especially popular in trap. They sound woody and are **discreet** into the mix. It is best to place them **in pairs**: one eighth note before and after the first and one eighth note before and after the third bar. This creates additional groove and makes your drum loop **more lively**.1

6 Loud 808s

The 808 takes on the role of the **Basses** and should therefore **present** and **powerful** sound. Basically, you place them **parallel** to the kick. If you prefer a **light, melodic beat** produce, better choose a **softer 808**, as an aggressive sound would not fit. Trust your hearing to find the right **balance** to find.r

Beatmaking Tutorial: Building a Melody

Dark Trap Leads in 2025

A catchy melody doesn't necessarily have to sound cheerful—in trap, it often thrives on dark vibes. Combined with hard drums and fast raps, it creates an intense sound that immediately sticks in your head. The best part: Crafting such a melody is easier than you think!

Project info:

Material: Arturia Analog Lab V, Arturia Piano V2, Electronic Sound Lab Creepy Piano 3, Church Bell FX
Time required:45 minutes
Contents: Creating a dark trap melody
Difficulty: Advanced

Audio demo

1 Choose key

You need a suitable key that carries the dark mood of your trap melody.

Minor keys like D minor, C minor, or G minor are best because they have a naturally dark sound. Then place a pad with a long attack time on the root note and let it play throughout the entire loop. This will provide a solid foundation for your melody.1

2 Less is more

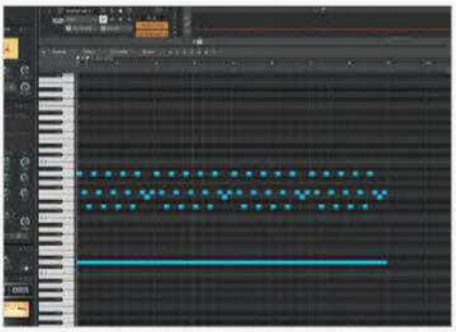
A trap melody thrives on simplicity and repetition. Instead of complex chords

You usually opt for a short, concise phrase that repeats constantly and is therefore immediately memorable. For the right sound, you can use a dark piano or a deep synthesizer. However, the sound should still leave room for the 808s.1

3 bass piano

To create a bass layer that does not overlap with the 808s, you can

You can use a piano that plays the root note of your key in a very low octave. Church bells are also popular, as they provide a somber, distinctive sound. You can also combine both elements to add additional depth to your melody.1



4 Add layers

Next, you'll create an additional layer: the reverse layer. For this effect, you can take a synth, convert the minor chord of your key into an arpeggio, and reverse the whole thing in your DAW to use it like a sample. Alternatively, you can also use a piano by increasing the attack, which creates a similar effect.1

5 EQ

Now comes a crucial step: The bass range needs to be cleaned up. For this, all tracks except the bass piano—that is, those from steps 1, 2, and 4—need a low cut. This leaves room for the 808 to sound clearer and more powerful. Layering multiple bass frequencies on top of each other would quickly make the mix muddy and almost inaudible.1

6 Effects

Finally, add the finishing touches to your melody with effects. Use reverb to create spatial depth or add delay for more movement. For a particularly dark trap sound, you can also try half-time or pitch shifting. This will make your melody appear even more atmospheric and stand out clearly against the beat.r

Presets and audio demos
in the magazine downloads
(see page 9)

Hands-on: Recreating Top Ten Sounds

Dope Tracks

Audio demo
Tyler, the Creator

Audio demo
Billa Joe x Shindy

The desire to have that ONE sound at home, that one track you can't get out of your head, unites us producers. Listen once, turn the knobs, and you're done. But then translating what you hear to the right parameters with the right values takes practice. Every month at Dope Tracks, we showcase two sounds from currently hot tracks—this month, "Stop Playing With Me" by Tyler, the Creator and "Don't Judge" by Billa Joe and Shindy.by Julian Schmauch

Project info:

Material:DAW, various plug-ins
Time required:1 – 2 hours
Contents: Reconstruct the sounds of popular pop and EDM tracks.
Difficulty: Advanced to professional

Tyler, the Creator – Stop Playing With Me: Bass with U-he Repro-1

1 Don't Tap the Glass

Tyler Gregory Okonma from Hawthorne, California, is a phenomenon. Under his stage name Tyler, the Creator, the rapper, producer, actor, and fashion designer has emerged as one of the most creative minds in contemporary hip-hop, first with the rap crew Odd Future (which also included Frank Ocean), and then increasingly solo.1

2 DIY or Die

For a long time now, Tyler has taken the rather rare approach in the genre of producing his beats almost exclusively himself. Thus, each track, each album bears his own personal musical signature. "Don't Tap The Glass" appeared almost out of nowhere on July 21, 2025, and shot straight to number one on the US Billboard charts. And on a Monday, no less!1

3 Machine Gun

Driving B-boy beats, machine gun bursts, synthwave arpeggio: "Stop Playing with Me" has an aggressive atmosphere. The dark, oppressive bass fits perfectly. We're recreating it with Repro-1. The bass line alternates between F-sharp and D and constantly booms and thrums in the track's chorus. The Sequential Pro One emulation helps us achieve this.1

4 Evil Square Wave

Both oscillators fire square waves, along with Osc A with a saw and Osc B with a triangle wave. In the mixer next to it, switch from Noise to Feedback and turn the control to 54, so the bass already distorts in Repro-1. Below that, turn Glide to 24, which creates a slight portamento between notes. The cutoff is also set to 67.1

5 Pitch Envelope

To achieve the 808 feel, an envelope needs to modulate the pitch of Osc A and B. To do this, send the filter envelope to Osc A and Osc B. The bass is then further shaped using the integrated EQ RESQ. A slight boost in the bass (+2.00) and a strong attenuation in the midrange (-7.00) bring the sound even closer to the original, while still adding a touch of lo-fi.1

6 Dropouts

If you listen closely, you'll notice brief dropouts in the bass line, as if the sound were being played from a scratched record or a broken tape. This is achieved with the RC-20, XLN's lo-fi classic. Just turn up the Magnetic module slightly (!) and set the "Dropouts" control to a maximum of 50%; otherwise, the bass line will become too unstable.r

Billa Joe x Shindy – Don't Judge: Lead with Synapse Audio Dune 3

1 Pep Guardiola

That's what PULS music magazine called Stickle, the producer of "Don't Judge." Bushido, Casper, Yung Hurn, Apache 207, Pashanim: Austrian Andreas Janetschko, Stickle's real name, has worked with the who's who of the German rap scene. He has frequently produced their most successful tracks, frequently setting trends.1

2 Billa Joe Superstar

Billa Joe, one of the two MCs on "Don't Judge," is still at the beginning of his career. With Stickle as producer and Shindy as a featured artist, the Soest-born, Mönchengladbach-raised rapper (from the rap crew Scorpion Gang) is making quite a statement. These two heavyweights on one beat —you're in for a treat.1

3 Fast rap

In B minor, 111 bpm, the lead synth of "Don't Judge" provides the relaxed foundation of the beat. The melody is similar to Pitbull's track "Hey Baby (Drop it to the floor)." However, the stripped-down drums, the wafting 808, and the rave-like synth in the chorus create an atmosphere that's impossible to escape.1

4 Dune 3 Lead

Even if the sound may sound quite simple, even such a complex

A powerful-sounding synth like Synapse Audio's Dune 3 requires a lot of fine-tuning to get close to its true quality. Let's start with precautions: Enable the limiter in Dune 3 and set the polyphony to mono so the MIDI notes don't overlap.1

5 Wavetable Bass

To get closer to the metallic character of the sound, I have set the

Activate the Wavetable module and load the "Clipazoid" wavetable there, then set the Semi an octave lower to -12. To make the sound bigger, turn up Unison in the top right corner of Dune 3, with AMT set to 4, Detune to 30%, and Spread to 80%. In the mixer, set OSC 2 to full volume.1

6 FM and filters

OSC 1 is intended to further enhance the metallic quality, which the FM module excels at. Here, set the FBK to 25% and the middle Ratio control to 3, along with OSC 1 in the mixer to 60%. For the filter, select "TR Lowpass 24 dB" as the type, set the cutoff to 76%, the Reso to 6%, the Drive to 30%, and the ENV AMT to 84%. Now for the envelopes.1

7 Without sustain!

Let's move on to the most important ingredient after the oscillators: the envelopes for the amp and filter. The very first thing to do is to set the sustain completely to 0 for both. For the amp envelope, set the attack to 13%, the decay to 64%, and the release to 54%. For the filter envelope, the attack is 0%, the decay to 45%, and the release to 74%. This brings us closer to the sound.1

8 Over the Top

A generous pinch of OTT is needed to further amp up the sound for the production, just as the beat demands. The freeware plugin from Xfer Records is perfectly sufficient for this. Just be careful not to turn the Depth (56%) up too high, or the sound will lose its dimension and sound too compressed and flattened.1

9 Valhalla Vintage

Even though the lead synth sounds very "in your face," a touch of room signal and size makes it seem more rounded. I achieved this with Valhalla Vintage Verb, probably the most popular reverb plugin. Mix at 44%, pre-delay at about 28 ms, decay at 0.23 s, and mode set to "Smooth Room" – this allows the sound to be better positioned in the arrangement.r

Your studio always in flow

Patchbays for Hip-Hop Producer

The session is underway, the rapper is on fire. Quickly switching from preamp A to preamp B, running the MPC through the compressor in parallel, and feeding in the latest beat idea from your smartphone? This is exactly where the difference is between a studio slowing down or accelerating. Black Lion Audio's patch bays, with audiophile connections and smart features, ensure smooth workflows. No matter the size of your studio.

Why a patchbay? Because speed, clarity, and sound quality must go hand in hand. With all sources permanently wired, you route from the front without disappearing behind the rack. This gives you the freedom to test different effects chains in seconds, run parallel compression on drums, or compare two preamp tones for vocals. Neat labeling and clear normalization eliminate paperwork, and gold-plated contacts and solid housings ensure stable signal paths. This way, your DAW, outboard, sampler, and even smartphone/tablet finally speak the same language.
– and you concentrate again on what matters: the music.

The hip-hop top 3 of Black Lion Audio

1 | PBR TRS3-LIT – 48-point TRS with LED labeling

The TRS3-LIT is the patchbay for producers who move a lot. 48 points with 96 gold-plated 1/4" TRS jacks, switchable normalization, and a black anodized front panel provide a solid foundation. The highlight is at the front: a bright, Freely labelable LED display. Transfer labels via USB or with a connected keyboard—no more tape and guesswork.

2 | PBR TRS-BT – TRS patchbay with Bluetooth

The TRS-BT combines 46 balanced TRS connectors with a clever idea: Bluetooth in the signal chain. Beats, hooks, or voice memos land directly from your phone or tablet in the studio. No adapters, no searching required. This is invaluable for spontaneous collaborations: The artist pairs their smartphone, plays their track, and you run the signal through an interface, compressor, or tape simulation as needed. This transforms phone sketches into fat beats in minutes.

3 | PBR 8-500 – 500-capacity lunchbox with integrated TT patchbay

Want to enhance your tracks with premium outboard in API lunchbox format? The PBR 8-500 combines eight 500 slots with an integrated TT patch bay. You can patch a complete vocal chain with preamp, compressor, and EQ in seconds, route drums in parallel, or add saturation modules to the MPC chain without having to remove the It's hard to lose track. Two multi-outputs make splitting easy, and they connect directly to the interface via XLR (linkable) and DB25.

Conclusion

Patchbays are the invisible heart of your workflow. They organize cable routing, make setups reproducible, and open up creative shortcuts. Especially in everyday hip-hop, this translates to pure speed: MPCs, drum machines, synths, and vocal preamps are all connected. You can patch in seconds without disrupting the flow and send DAW stems through your outboard gear with minimal loss. This is precisely where Black Lion Audio comes in with the PBR series: solid mechanics, audiophile-grade signal routing, and features that really matter: visible labeling (TRS3-LIT), mobile integration of ideas (TRS-BT), and modular power in a 500-series form factor (8-500). Less unplugging, more flow – and the energy stays focused: on the mic, on the MPC, in the song.

www.blacklionaudio.de | www.audiowerk.eu

THE HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE

PBR TRS3-LIT

48-point patchbay, 96 gold-plated TRS jacks

LED display with USB labeling / keyboard

Normal / Semi-normal / Thru, robust steel housing

Price:505 euros

PBR TRS-BT

46 balanced TRS connectors

Bluetooth for mobile phone/tablet in the signal chain

Normalization modes at the touch of a button, gold-plated contacts

Price:289 euros

PBR 8-500

8 slots for 500 modules, front TT patchbay

2 multi-outputs for splitting, XLR linkable, DB25

Clean power supply, low noise / minimized crosstalk

Price: 249 euros

Recording without compromise

The problem solver for vocals

Whether explosive raps, melodic hooks, or trendy Auto-Tune vocals for trap and the like: your voice carries the track. This is exactly where the Tascam TA-1VP comes in, with its excellent Antares effects. In a single rack unit, the device offers real-time Auto-Tune EVO, microphone modeling, analog tube simulation, as well as compressor, gate, de-esser, and EQ. For stage and studio, with low latency, stable performance, and presets at your fingertips.

Problem 1: The vocals sound thin, uneven, hissing and too "digital".

Solution:
The solution is a complete vocal chain built directly into the hardware. Auto-Tune EVO corrects pitch in real time, either chromatically or by key/scale, subtle for organic vocals or succinctly for a modern vibe. The compressor brings even dynamic raps to the forefront in a controlled manner, and the 2-band EQ adds presence and fullness. De-essers and gates defuse sibilance and background noise, while the high-pass filter eliminates undertones. When character is lacking, the analog tube simulation adds warmth and density without overpowering the top end. This puts the vocals at the forefront—clear, controlled, and musical.

Problem 2: Not enough width and pressure – hooks sound small.

Solution:
Width doesn't just happen in the mixdown. The TA-1VP allows automatic double-tracking directly in the device: mono or stereo, and with a separate output, so you can shape the doubles yourself. With gentle tube saturation and a powerful compressor, hooks become wider and raps denser – all without extra takes.

Problem 3: In the studio, Auto-Tune sounds tight, but on stage the latency kills the vibe.

Solution:
Who wants to mess around with a laptop and latency on stage? The TA-1VP handles Auto-Tune in real time, with no noticeable delay. The device lets you adjust speed and sensitivity so artists can hear the finished vibe right from the start, from subtle smoothing to the signature trap effect. Preset recall, MIDI control, and an optional footswitch make switching between different parts like the verse or hook a breeze. The result: The effect works in the studio as well as in the club, and the performance stays in flow.

Problem 4: Every mic and every room changes the sound – the sound is never the same.

Solution:
You change the microphone or the room, and the voice sounds different. With its microphone modeling, the TA-1VP compensates for this. You simply define the desired character—from dynamic to large-diaphragm, from drum to telephone—and adjust the proximity effect to your liking. Thanks to the integrated 48V preamp for condenser microphones, line I/O, and S/PDIF, the device integrates flexibly into any studio or live rig. The result: Your signature sound remains consistent, whether in the studio or on stage.

Problem 5: Technology stress kills inspiration.

Solution:
More music, less mouse: The TA-1VP gives you direct access to Auto-Tune, Modeling, Dynamics, and EQ. Status LEDs show what's happening. The endless encoder quickly accesses the target parameters. Song setups are easily saved as presets, and the robust 19" housing is suitable for touring. Once set up, it can be accessed anywhere, regardless of the computer.

Conclusion
One device instead of ten plug-ins: With the Tascam TA-1VP, you get a reliable vocal center in your rack: explosive raps, distinctive trap vocals, and warm hooks – consistent on stage and in the studio, without latency drama and without plug-in dependency. The result: a stable, modern vocal sound that works everywhere.

www.tascam.eu | 447 euros

THE HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Auto-Tune EVO in real time: from subtle to modern and striking – ideal for trap & melodic hooks
- Microphone modeling including proximity control: from dynamic microphones to high-end condenser models
- Analog tube modeling: more warmth and density
- Dynamics & EQ on board: Compressor (variable knee), Gate, De-Esser, flexible 2-band EQ
- Automatic Double-Tracking: Mono/Stereo, individual output
- Presets, MIDI & Footswitch: Scene changes in seconds
- Live & studio suitable: low latency, robust 19" design, mic pre with 48 V, line I/O & S/PDIF

HANDS-ON

A COMPLETE HIP-HOP SONG IN 9 CHAPTERS

Welcome to a comprehensive guide that will guide you step by step through the production of your first hip-hop song. Whether you're just starting out or already have experience, here you'll learn how to create a professional production from A to Z. In the following chapters, we'll take you on a journey that begins with the first instrument recordings and continues through to the final vocal recording.

BY THE WAY:

If you'd like to start one step earlier, or take on mastering after song production, or perhaps even be interested in recording a podcast, check out the complete e-book on production with GarageBand, which you can find in the magazine's downloads.

While we'll focus on the intuitive software GarageBand in this workshop, the techniques and principles presented here are universally applicable. You can easily transfer the same workflows and concepts to any other DAW. It's not about the specific software, but rather how you build, arrange, and refine a song from the ground up.

Recording instruments

Do you have the vision of filling your song with real instruments or collaborating with professional musicians to give it a unique touch? Then this chapter is for you. We'll show you how to record instruments like electric and acoustic guitars so they fit perfectly into your mix. The quality of your recordings lays the foundation for a professional sound.

An important tip up front: Before you start recording, you should carefully prepare your equipment. Make sure your guitar is freshly strung and tuned to avoid any problems later. Proper microphone positioning can also make a huge difference. Capturing the perfect sound is often a matter of experimentation.

arrangement

A good song thrives on its arrangement. It's the art of weaving different musical elements together to tell an exciting story and captivate the listener. An overly convoluted verse can be just as frustrating as a chorus that just doesn't connect. We'll show you how to work with markers to clearly define your song's structure.

Learn how to use instruments in the different parts of a song – intro, verse, bridge and outro – skillfully used to build dynamics and tension. Sometimes less is more; omitting an instrument can create a surprising effect at a particular moment.

Recording vocals

Once the basic structure of your song is in place, it's time for the vocals. Vocals are often the heart of the track and deserve special attention. In this chapter, we'll prepare for vocal recording, from choosing the right microphone to creating a comfortable atmosphere for the artist.

The correct setting of the monitor mix is also crucial so that the singer or

Singers can hear themselves clearly. We'll also cover post-production and give you valuable tips on how to make your vocals sound professional with features like pitch correction.r

1 // Recording “real” instruments

Equipment and leveling

In Chapter 4, we'll show you how to record instruments in GarageBand. But before you or the artists in your studio can start recording, you need to get the right equipment and set the correct levels.

1 audio interface

If you want to record instruments or vocals, you need an audio interface. Simply put, this converts the analog audio signals at the inputs so that your computer can understand and record them. It also provides outputs to which you can connect headphones or speakers. Here, the signals are converted back.1

2 Important features

Your audio interface should have one or more XLR inputs for microphones, as well as line/Hi-Z inputs for instruments. It should also have built-in preamps for amplifying audio signals. Condenser microphones require 48-volt phantom power. Your converter should also have this feature.1

3 headphones

If you're recording instruments or vocals, you'll need suitable headphones. This allows you to listen to the playback and play or sing along without picking up bleedover from the microphone. We recommend closed, circumaural studio headphones, as their design minimizes outside noise.1

4 Cable

To ensure high sound quality when recording me, you should choose high-quality Install audio cables. When purchasing, pay attention to the build quality and shielding. If possible, check the quality of the solder joints. Gold-plated connectors ensure cables last longer. Make sure you buy the right cable for your application.1

5 Audio level

Before you record instruments or vocals, you need to adjust the audio level of the
You can adjust the input signal correctly using the preamp's gain control.
If the signal level is too low, noise will be audible on the recording; if it's too high, clipping will occur. Make sure to leave enough space before clipping.1

6 Correct leveling

Set the fader to 0 dB. A good benchmark for signals is when the reading is at most in the yellow area. The signal should never be in the red area of the meter. Have the musicians play or sing the loudest passages while you adjust the level. This way, you'll be on the safe side and avoid clipping.r

2 // Recording “real” instruments

electric guitar to record

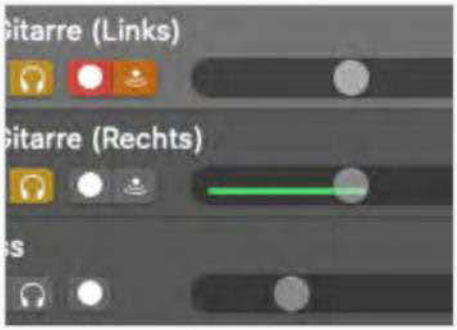
GarageBand is especially interesting for guitarists and bassists, as it offers a richly featured virtual pedalboard and a great-sounding amp/speaker emulation. In this workshop, you'll learn how to record an electric guitar.

1 Pre-recording

Before recording your (electric) guitar, you should check the instrument. We recommend putting on new strings and playing the guitar several times.
Tune the guitar—even during the recording process. A recording of an out-of-tune electric guitar is almost impossible to repair afterward. Click on the tuning fork to the left of the metronome to access a tuner.1

2 Let's go

Connect your electric guitar to the Hi-Z port on your interface using a suitable instrument cable. This has a high input impedance for guitars with passive pickups. This allows the sound to fully unfold. Press [E] to open the Smart Controls and select your interface's input. Now you can adjust the signal level.1



3 Recording

We select the "Electric Guitar (Right)" track and click "Activate Recording." We also enable input monitoring to hear what we're playing while recording, and press [K] for the metronome. Now we select the correct input. The shortcut [R] triggers recording. With Cycle enabled, you can play your part multiple times.1

4 Select preset

We've now recorded the clean guitar signals. "Electric Guitar (Left)" shows chords, and "Electric Guitar (Right)" shows a picking pattern. Now it's time to find the right sound. Click on the track icon. You can now select a suitable patch from the library. We're happy with "Amazing Tweed" for the left and "Dyna-Term" for the right.1

5 (Bass) Amp Designer

Each patch is comprised of various plug-ins, some of which we'll discuss later. Two tools are particularly important for our guitar. The (Bass) Amp Designer provides emulations of popular guitar and bass amps and cabinets with various microphones that can be combined. You can customize the sound as you wish.1

6 Pedalboard

Pedalboard provides you with the sounds of many famous effects pedals. You can equip your track with numerous stomp boxes and arrange them as you wish. The signal flow runs from left to right. You can add two separate basses, which are linked to mixer and splitter units. Tweak your pedalboard until you get the perfect sound.r

3 // Recording “real” instruments

acoustic guitar to record

In this workshop, we'll record an acoustic guitar with a microphone. It's actually quite easy. Just like with an electric guitar, you should put on new strings and tune the instrument regularly before recording. Let's go!

1 Which microphone?

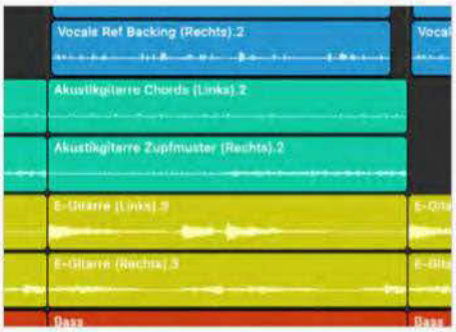
We chose a large-diaphragm condenser microphone to record our acoustic guitar. Compared to dynamic mics, these offer better resolution and more detailed reproduction of higher frequency ranges—but they are also more sensitive. These microphones are particularly well-suited for recording vocals, strings, and pianos.1

2 positioning

There are many ways to achieve your goal when it comes to mic placement. There's no right or wrong. Experiment to get a feel for the mic and the instrument. Sooner or later, you'll be satisfied with the sound.
– promised. We position the mic slightly angled toward the sound hole, at the 12th fret – 15 to 20 centimeters away.1

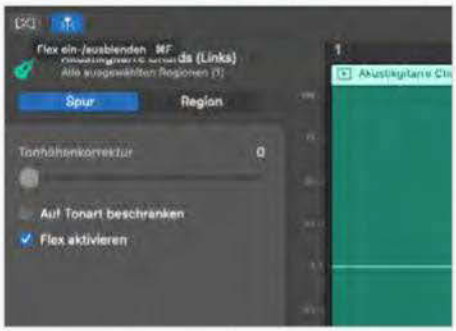
3 Important settings

When using a condenser microphone, you'll need to enable 48V phantom power on your interface. Now you can adjust the signal levels as described in Workshop 10 and apply the recording settings from Workshop 11. Make sure your room is quiet, otherwise you'll have distracting noise on your recording.1



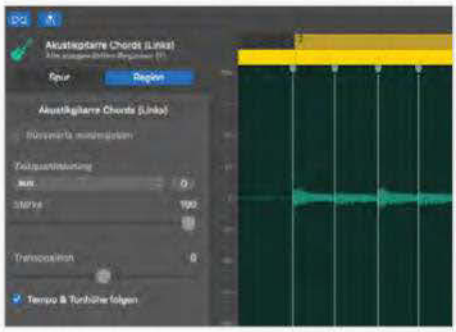
4 Recording

Try not to get nervous while recording to move too much to reduce the distance to the
Be careful not to interfere with the microphone. Otherwise, your recording will sound different over time. Remove the rings from your fingers, the necklace from your wallet, and stand far away from your computer's fan. Now you can start recording.1



5 Flex Time

The acoustic guitar recordings are not quite in time. So they are suitable for
to explain the Flex Time feature. This allows you to edit the timing of events in audio regions. Flex markers are available as tools. Double-click the audio region, activate "Enable Flex," and then select "Show Flex" in the top left corner.1



6 Adjustments

We select the acoustic guitar tracks and see dashed lines that correspond to the starting point of each note. We can now click on these lines to create flex markers. Activate all markers up to the end. If one doesn't fit, you can simply click where it should be. Drag the markers to the correct position in time.r

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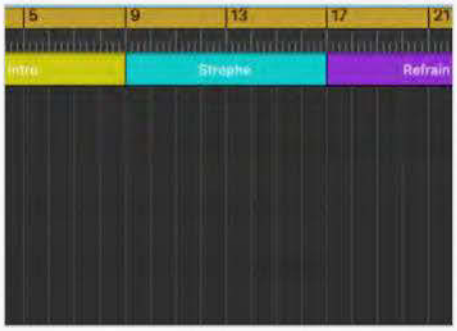
4 // Arrangement

Working with Arrangement markers

We've now recorded or programmed all the instruments we need for our song. But before we start recording the vocals, we need to create a song structure and place the instruments.

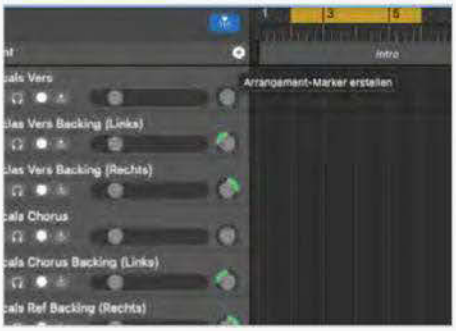


1 Song structure

A song consists of parts that provide structure and excitement. Our song continues together: Intro – Verse – Chorus – Bridge – Chorus – Outro. Of course, there are other parts, such as the pre-chorus. How you structure your song is up to you. For clarity, make sure to use recurring terms.1

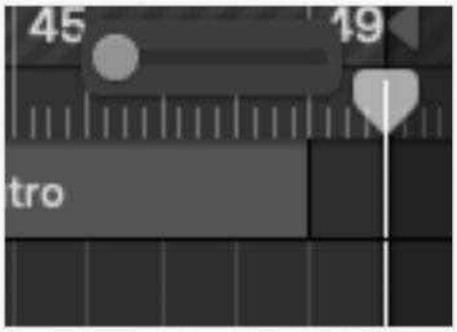
2 Arrangement markers

You can add arrangement markers to any project to highlight the different Mark sections of your song. You can then move these markers, including the instruments they contain, to try out different arrangements. The first marker starts at the beginning of a project, and each subsequent marker starts at the end of the previous one.1



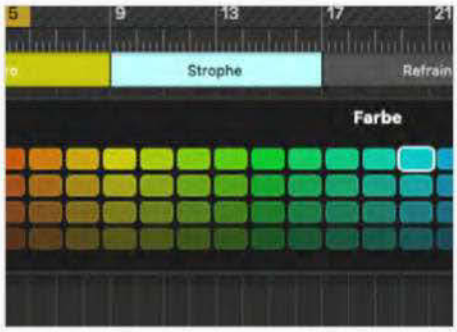
3 Create markers

Press [Command] + [Shift] + [A] to create a so-called arrangement track. This appears at the top above the first track. On the far right, you'll find a plus sign. Pressing this creates a marker at the playhead position. The created markers are automatically named, but you can customize the name at any time using a dropdown menu.1



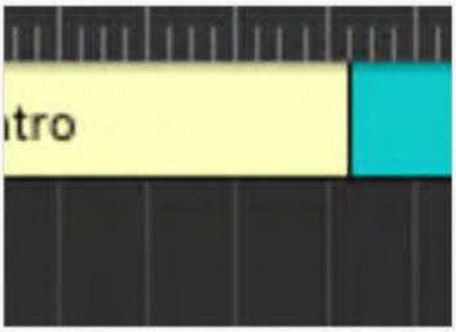
4 Song end

When arranging songs, you may quickly reach the end of the timeline defined by Garage Band. However, there's a small triangle in the top right corner, at the time signature, that you can drag to define the end of the song. You can adjust this value at any time to expand or contract your workspace.1



5 Colors

Just like tracks, you can also color-code markers. Open the color palette with [Option] + [C] and click on the marker you want to color. Now all you have to do is select the color. We recommend always using the same color for recurring song parts, like the chorus. This provides more clarity.1



6 Adjust markers

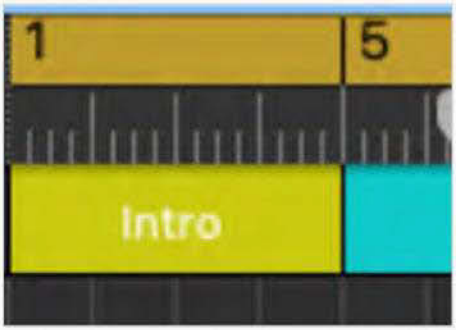
When you create a marker, it will initially be eight bars long. This length isn't suitable for every song section, of course. However, you can easily lengthen or shorten any marker by dragging it on either side with the mouse. We'll cover the instrumentation of the individual parts in the next workshop.r

5 // Arrangement

instrumentation

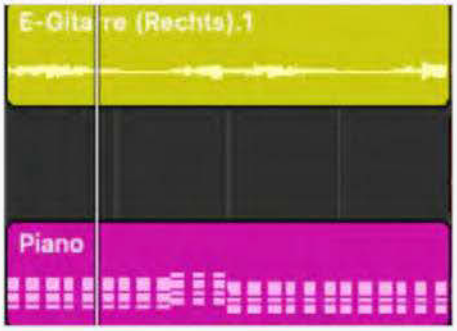
the song parts part 1

Now that we've created all the markers, we can place our audio and MIDI regions in the song so that not all instruments play at the same time. This will make the song more exciting. In the first part, we'll cover the intro, bridge, and outro.



1 Intro

The intro serves to prepare the listener for the song and grab their attention. The main melody and/or the main instrument can be played here. Most intros do without vocals entirely. However, there are also songs that forgo this element and start directly with the verses – our song is not one of them.1

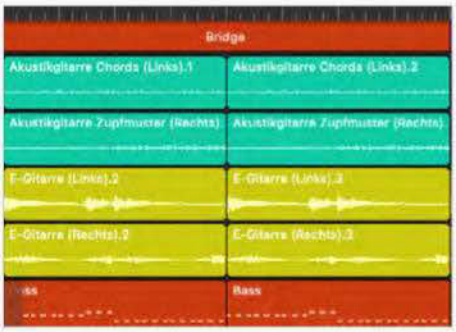


2 instrumentation

Our intro consists of three tracks. The piano is the most important instrument in our song due to its rhythm and chord progression. That's why it appears in the four-bar intro. We'll also have the two electric guitar tracks playing. You can copy regions by dragging while holding down the [Option] key.1

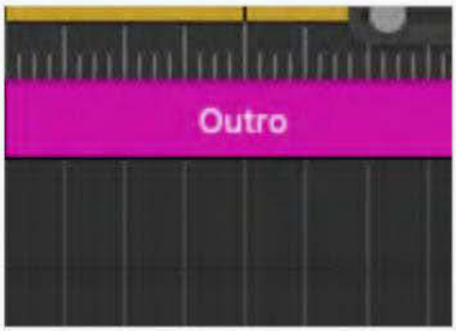
3 bridge

A bridge, as the name suggests, serves to connect two passages in a song. It can be placed anywhere in the song, but is usually used towards the end, between the last two choruses. Its purpose is to create tension and, in our case, to introduce the final chorus in such a way that it represents the climax of the song.1



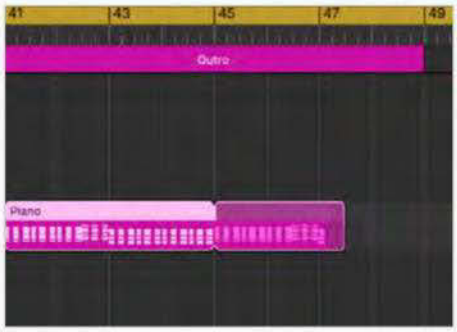
4 instrumentation

To make our bridge more exciting, there's no piano. The "Acoustic Guitar Picking Pattern (Right)" track, in particular, creates a lot of excitement thanks to its muted pattern. We'll also add the second acoustic guitar track and both electric guitars. The bass is also a must. We'll omit the drums; they'll only be added in the chorus.1



5 Outro

The outro is the end of the song. There are several ways to design an outro. For example, you can either make the instruments less active and the last chord fades out, or you can let the arrangement or parts of it fade out. Click on "Mix," "Create Volume Fade-Out at Main Output." Your song will now gradually fade out.1



6 End

The outro in our song comes directly after the chorus. We opted for a hard cut and only let the piano play in the outro. It gradually fades away in the last four bars. Later, we also add the vocals, which then slowly fade away along with the piano. This simply creates a great ending.r

6 // Arrangement

instrumentation

the song parts part 2

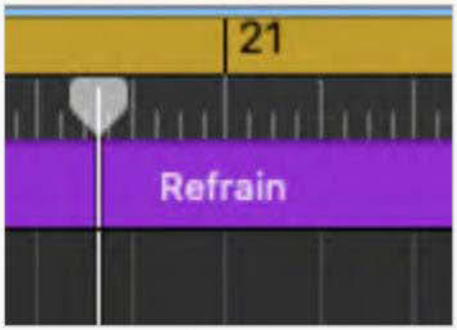
In the last workshop, we covered the intro, bridge, and outro, adding instruments to these song elements. Now we're moving on to the verse and chorus.

1 verse

Verses are often the longest elements of a song. This is where you can tell a lot of your story. They usually appear multiple times, and their lyrics are different from each other—unlike the chorus, which usually repeats the same lyrics over and over again. We only have one verse in our song, which spans 12 bars.1

2 Construction

We start the verse like the intro—except we add the bass to introduce a new element to the listener. After four bars, we add the drums. This slowly introduces the listener to the song. Now we're already showing the listener a lot of our song. Make sure to save a few elements for the chorus.1



3 refrain

The chorus tells the audience what it's about. "Baby, you're all that I want!" – you get the idea. You can let your imagination run wild in the chorus and use a lot of instruments. This ensures that the hook is the strongest element in your song and underscores its message. The chorus is also usually the part that sticks in the listener's head.1

4 instrumentation

The instrumentation in the verses is usually more stripped down than in the chorus. We'll reverse this and launch into the hook without drums, only to add drums, hi-hat, and shaker after four bars. As you can see, there are no rules here, and if there are, it's worth breaking them. Play with the unexpected and surprise your listeners!1

5 Loop

As mentioned, you can copy regions by holding down the Option key. There's also a way to extend regions. Move the mouse to the top right corner of the region. The Loop tool will appear, and you can repeat the regions by dragging. If you make any changes to the original region, all repeats will also change!1

6 Preparation singing

The arrangement is now complete, and we can start recording the vocals. Before you press the record button, have the singers sing along to the finished arrangement several times. This way, you can determine if you need to make any adjustments to the arrangement and be sure that all the parts work. Let's start recording the vocals!r

7 // Record vocals professionally

Preparations for Vocal recordings

Now our arrangement is complete and we can record the main vocals.
In this workshop, we'll show you how to prepare for an excellent vocal recording.

1 The microphone

To record our main vocals, we use a large-diaphragm condenser microphone with a cardioid polar pattern. In short, this primarily captures the sound from the front. The lateral influences are much quieter, and from the rear, they're barely perceptible. This combination creates warmth and a direct sound.1

2 Pop filter

When recording vocals, unwanted "pop" sounds can occur. This is particularly noticeable with the letters "P" and "B." To control this problem, a pop filter is used. This is placed about ten centimeters in front of the microphone capsule and attenuates the unwanted noise.1

3 distance

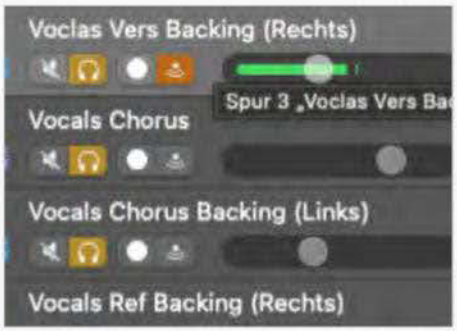
Make sure the microphone is pointed at the mouth. You can play with the distance. The closer you are, the bassier your sound will be. We recorded at a distance between 15 and 20 centimeters and achieved the best sound this way. Make sure the artists don't move too much during the performance—otherwise, the sound will change.1

4 Ambient noise

Microphones pick up everything that comes their way. If you record while sitting on an old chair, for example, the creaking will also be recorded. Make sure you drink non-sparkling drinks. This will reduce the smacking sounds of dry mouths and prevent the constant burping that can be triggered by carbonated drinks.1

5 The performance

Make yourself comfortable! Are you used to singing while sitting down? Then record that way. If you perform better by candlelight, record that way, too. It's important that you or the artists feel comfortable to capture the best possible performance. Make sure your distance from the microphone remains the same throughout the recording.1



6 Monitor mix

When recording, it's important that the artists can hear each other clearly. After adjusting the levels, you can pull the fader of the track you're recording to all the way to the right and turn on the input monitoring. Adjust the metronome volume. If you're recording in a listening room, mute the speakers. Closed-back headphones are your friend.
r

8 // Record vocals professionally

It's starting: Recording the vocals

Now that we've wired up the singers, we can start recording. In this workshop, we'll show you how to create a great vocal recording.

1 Recording area

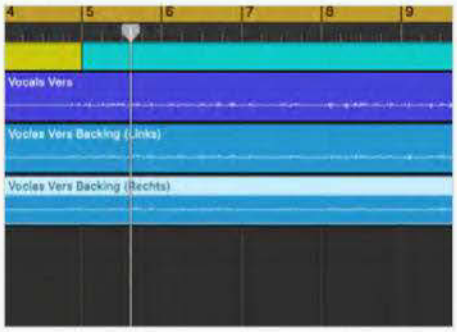
Press [C] on your keyboard and activate Cycle. Now drag the orange bar that appears over the section you want to record. Make sure there's one more bar before and after this section. We'll drag the cycle section over the verse, ensuring that this part repeats during recording.1

2 Working with takes

If you record something now and aren't satisfied with the result, you don't have to start recording again each time. Since the song section repeats, you can now record multiple takes on top of each other and choose the best one at the end of the session. You can later sort out and easily delete the parts you don't like.1

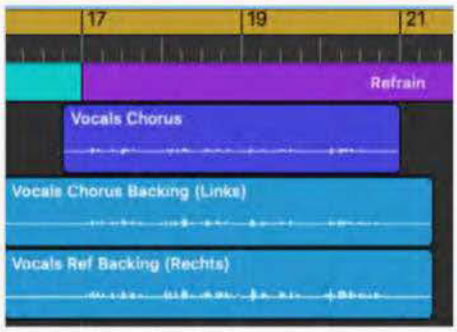
3 More microphones

We record three vocal tracks for each song part with vocals: the main vocals and two tracks for backing vocals. To create a sonic distinction during the recording, we record the backing vocals with a dynamic microphone. This imparts a different timbre to the supporting vocals, thus ensuring differentiation.1



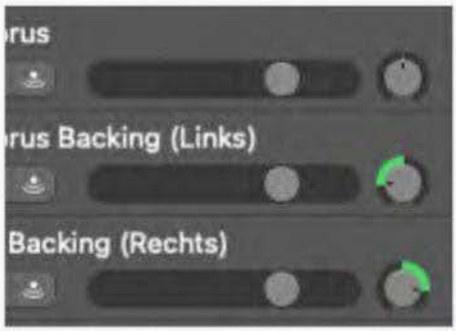
4 Vocal colors

We also have the backing vocals recorded a bit lower, with a different emphasis and vocal timbre. This creates a more interesting sound and supports the lead vocals. The backing vocals are then added at a lower volume later, forming a barely perceptible foundation for our vocals. You can also double specific parts.1



5 The Chorus

The chorus repeats itself over and over again, and since there are no lyrical variations, it's sufficient to record it only once and then copy it into the other sections of the song. This makes it all the more important that the vocal recordings of the chorus sound great. Of course, you can also record the chorus several times to create variation in the song.1



6 Panning

After recording, all vocal tracks come from the center. This causes them to overlap, and the main vocals are somewhat drowned out. We set the pan controls for the backing tracks to 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock, respectively. This way, they come more from the left and right, creating separation and a fuller sound. Now we need to edit the tracks.r

9 // Record vocals professionally

More vocal Edits

Now that we've recorded all the vocals, we need to prepare our session for mixing. In this workshop, you'll learn how to clean up your song and focus on the mixing process in the next chapter.

1 Cropping

During recordings, you often end up with passages that you don't need in the song, as they occur before and after the vocals. These often contain breaths. If you move the mouse to the left or right side of the audio region, you can lengthen or shorten it by dragging. Double-clicking the region opens the audio editor, where you can make more detailed adjustments.1

2 Cut out

If you notice annoying breaths or similar noises between vocal passages while listening to your recorded vocal tracks, you can also remove them. Select the region, click in front of the breath, and press [Command] + [T]. The region will now be split at that point, and you can make the annoying noise disappear by dragging.1

3 Copy

Since we only recorded the chorus once, but the vocal passage appears several times in the song, we still need to copy it to the correct places. Make sure the beginning of the passage starts on a bar. This will make it easier to find the right starting point in the other passages later. You can then trim the beginning again.1

4 Wiretapping

After trimming the audio files, it's important to listen through them all again, individually and solo. This way, you can quickly determine if you've accidentally cut out parts of the vocals or if any sections are no longer in time due to incorrect movement. This is time well spent! Then listen to all the tracks together.1

5 Low cut

Before mixing, you can also clean up your vocals' frequencies. This way, you can eliminate potential noises like low rumble below 100 Hz. We'll load the channel EQ and activate a low cut at 141 Hz (48 dB/octave) on the main vocals. Since we're getting the foundation from the backing tracks, this starts at 100 Hz.1

6 Tuning

If you're working with multiple vocal tracks playing simultaneously, it's a good idea to tune them to avoid dissonance. Click on the track in Editor mode. You can adjust the pitch correction in the Track tab. A value of 100 creates the familiar Auto-Tune effect. A value of 15, which only affects the key, is sufficient for us.r

Get the studio standard in your lunchbox

Your vocal recordings everywhere

If you want to create a truly professional vocal sound outside of a studio, you need powerful hardware for your lunchbox/API 500 frame that fits perfectly into your trolley. We've compiled four top products that guarantee a top-notch professional sound with individual character. We promise!

sE Electronics sE2200

Leading Chinese microphone manufacturer sE Electronics has the right microphone and useful accessories for everyone. A modern classic is the sE2200 large-diaphragm condenser microphone, an improved version of the award-winning sE2200a II C. The microphone features a handcrafted 1-inch capsule and fixed cardioid polar pattern, covers a wide frequency response from 20 to 20,000 Hz, is remarkably low-noise, and combines a crisp, present sound with warmth. It's an ideal transducer for making your vocals shine in the mix. Incidentally, soul icon Amy Winehouse was already familiar with this, as she often and happily recorded with the sE2200.

If you're looking to run entire productions, the sE2300 would also be an attractive alternative: It's the multipattern version of the sE2200, offering cardioid, omnidirectional, and figure-8 polar patterns. Both microphones are true condenser microphones, and sE Electronics also equips them and you with a high-quality Class A circuitry using high-quality, discrete components. This level of professional technology is available for just €280 in the case of the sE2200, and for €370 in the case of the even more versatile sE2300.

To ensure your vocals sound great even without a vocal booth, sE Electronics has been offering a clever solution for years with its reflection filters. The brand new SPACE (Specialized Portable Acoustic Control Environment) reflection filter further develops the reflection filter concept: SPACE features ten acoustic layers instead of seven, significantly increasing the effectiveness of this acoustic screen for reducing distracting ambient noise during recording compared to the still-available Pro version. Although slightly larger, the SPACE weighs barely more, and the newly developed mount is undoubtedly more flexible. The SPACE is available for €330, while the Pro remains affordable at €220.

Rupert Neve Designs 511

A true condenser microphone requires a suitable preamp. If it's also a real powerhouse, it can be an important tool for creating your signature sound. "Mister" Rupert Neve spent his long life creating devices with a very special sound, and the 511 microphone preamp module in the API 500 format is no exception. We're dealing with a Class A transistor preamp that provides a maximum gain of 72 dB. This definitely puts you on the safe and professional side in terms of headroom. Noise on the recording is therefore not an issue, and the preamp also works well with low-sensitivity microphones like passive ribbons.

The high-pass filter, with a slope of 12 dB/octave, is continuously adjustable between frequencies of 20 and 250 Hz, effectively combating not only impact noise but also proximity effect. A Rupert Neve Designs specialty is also a must: the "Silk" circuitry of the preamp, fundamentally optimized for signal fidelity, offers a powerful sound feature that truly delivers the legendary Neve sound of the 1066/1073/1084 family in subtle doses via a continuously variable texture control. The preamp, with special Rupert Neve-style sound options, is available for a reasonable €938.

Cranborne Brick Lane 500

A powerful compressor is a must-have in any setup. But how about six of them—in one API 500 module, mind you? The sound-obsessed people at Cranborne Audio have created such a multipurpose tool with the brand-new Brick Lane 500. The new model offers six different compression characteristics—VELVET, FLOAT, SMASH, TAME, GLUE, and POLISH—that put the sound of legendary hardware compressors in your hands. The heart of the Brick Lane 500, its groundbreaking Modal PWM compression technology, makes this possible. For example, SMASH delivers the distinctive bite of world-famous FET compressors of American provenance, while VELEVT offers the musical, feel-good sound of vintage Vari-Mu style with tube-like harmonic compression.

Clever: The patchbay is reconfigured in each mode, offering each module its own unique compression style, with unique compression ballistics that fundamentally alter the behavior of the Brick Lane 500. Consequently, each module has its own control behavior for attack and release: rather ponderously slow in Vari-Mu mode or lightning-fast in FET style. The compression ratios cover everything from gentle 2:1 boosts to aggressive 20:1 sound generators. The same applies to the knee characteristic, which can be rounded and gentle or razor-sharp and precise – depending on your preferences and settings. The Brick Lane 500 operates 100 percent analog – there is no latency – and, overall, demonstrates the engineering skills of the Cranborn Audio developers, driven by a true enthusiasm for high-quality analog sound.

The Brick Lane 500, which is also easy to use, is equally suitable for tracking, mixing, and mastering due to its sonic versatility. It's therefore a long-term investment for all production stages, which is why its price of €876 is definitely reasonable.

Audeze LCD-S20

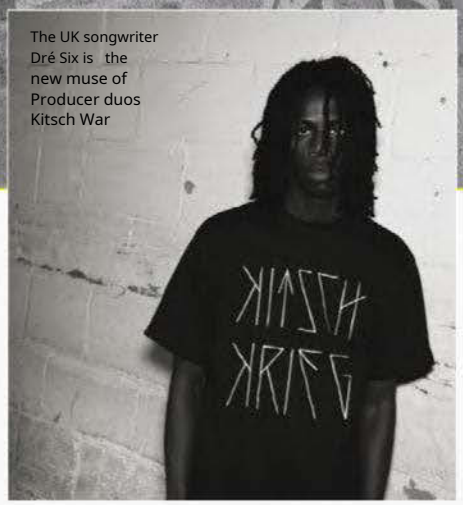
A good pair of headphones is a must in your luggage - no question about it. Because of their superior impulse response and the fine resolution that brings every detail to your ears

Magnetostats have rightly been highly regarded for several years. Audeze is one of the leading manufacturers of "planar magnetic" professional monitors and can cover a wide range with its portfolio. Audeze's outrageously expensive monitoring specialists are rather unsuitable for your purposes due to their open design.

But the Americans also have a headphone for recording purposes: The closed-back LCD-S20 offers the superior transient response of planar magnetic drivers, allowing you to effortlessly follow the click track. Thanks to the headphone's design, which features outstanding passive noise cancellation, the click won't interfere with your vocal track. For concentrated listening, the LCD-S20 offers studio-quality sound – after all, like the Audeze flagship CRBN2, SLAM technology ensures, among other things, improved spatial imaging – so you can easily create an initial rough mix. So it's all the more pleasing that the LCD-S20, a true Audeze, is available for an affordable €619.r

Discovered: Kitsch War

Laptop, laptop, love



The UK songwriter Dré Six is the new muse of Producer duos Kitsch War

For almost a decade, Kitschkrieg set the tone in German hip hop. Their production process—obsessive, meticulous, and characterized by a deep respect for the roots—as well as their close, long-term relationships with a small group of rappers made them exceptional. Now they've turned their backs on Europe. Did the risk pay off?

Görlitzer Straße 52 in Kreuzberg. (Part I)

For a feature by online retailer Stoked, Christoph Wilhelm Erkes, aka Fizzle, returns to the place where the biggest Kitschkrieg hits were created. Standing with photographer and director Pascal Kerouche in an inconspicuous Berlin courtyard, the pair look up at the fourth-floor windows and discuss what has changed since Fizzle and his studio partner Christian Yun-Song Meyerholz, aka Fiji Kris, closed the studio behind it, terminated the lease, and moved their home base from Germany to the USA. [1] It's 2024, and Kitschkrieg's American adventure has only just begun. And yet, one already feels a slight melancholy as Christoph talks about the early years, when their sound was a niche and they were still at the beginning of their career. A few days and a long transatlantic flight later, he and Pascal are sitting in Atlanta with Fiji Kris, who sums up the situation as follows: "You can always go back. But certain doors do close." Celebrating at home, starting over in a foreign country – can that work?

Kitschkrieg have secured themselves a little bit after their departure from Germany. Their international debut album, "German Engineering," was released in two parts. One documents their first steps in the United States and, with Future (almost 50 billion streams),

- To write a good song, the mood, the creative process, and the conversation with each other are important.-«

and Mariah the Scientist (3 million followers) have some global superstar features in their luggage. The other, however, is dedicated to the British scene, about which the duo said the following: "The hottest shit comes from there, not from the USA." [2] Musically, the difference could hardly be greater: While the American productions lean more heavily on global trends like trap without denying the Kitschkrieg signature, the British collaborations are dominated by the sounds of the "hardcore continuum", this glorious timeline that stretches from reggae and dub to jungle, rave and drum n bass to dubstep and bass music, while also incorporating more modern trends like amapiano. Kitschkrieg will therefore never be able to completely separate themselves from their roots - they simply love this music too much for that.

Sometime in the early 2010s.

One evening, Christian arrives at Braunschweig's Brain Club, arguably the city's most famous venue. The parties here last longer, the artists are more exciting, the guests more relaxed, and the music is louder. A band called Symbz is playing on stage, mixing hip-hop with dancehall, downbeat, and dub. As a fan of all these styles, Christian is immediately captivated. But what truly fascinates him is how one of the members plays, mixes, and remixes the tracks live on stage using homemade controllers. He's not the only one to notice Fiji Kris's boundless talent. Soon, Absolute Beginner, among others, will be knocking on his door.

But the connection with Fizzle proves to be the most far-reaching. He books him in Krefeld, they become friends, and at one of many dancehall parties in Cologne, he meets Nicole Schettler, who will become the visual component of Kitschrieg under the name awhodat. [3]

Minimalism is Kitschrieg's most distinctive characteristic. Their motto, "Laptop, Laptop, Lens" (the latter referring to awhodat's stark black-and-white camera aesthetic), has become their philosophy. "One of the first studios I worked in had a Neve preamp. It basically had two knobs, one for the input and one for the output—but it sounded great," Fiji Kris tells us. "I realized that good sound can be very simple—a valuable lesson." Fizzle agrees: "To write a good song, mood, creative process, and conversation count. My recording chain consists only of an Apollo interface and a Neumann U87." He thinks for a moment. "Honestly, you don't even need the Neumann." While they work in Atlanta's famous Blue Room Studios, their second studio in Los Angeles is similarly simple to their former Berlin headquarters: a pair of ATC SCEM 45 cabinets—expensive but admired by studio pros for their near-distortion-free, clear sound—and the Trinnov Nova as a monitor controller. "You walk in, plug in the Apollo audio interface, and off you go."

One would think that with such a reduced approach, tracks could be produced on an assembly line almost in no time

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2gHgGa5huQ
[2] https://www.wonderlandmagazine.com/2025/05/23/kitschkrieg-dre-six-interview/; [3] https://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/kitschkrieg

DISCOGRAPHY (ABSTRACT):

//1 / 2019
//Kitsch War / 2020
//German Engineering 1 / 2023 //
German Engineering Two / 2024 //
London's Calling / 2025

In truth, however, it's the other way around for the duo: Almost no one takes longer to produce than Kitschkrieg. For a project that has now completed almost a decade, their studio output is downright pitifully small. The arrangements, stripped down to the essentials, are the result of endless deliberations and constant rebuilding. One of their breakthrough singles, "Unterwegs" with Jamule, is a good example. The piece is a kind of reinterpretation of the Seeed classic "Aufstehn." Fizzle and Fiji Kris had the original - the one with a central

The Mellotron part offered some extremely interesting starting points – already intensively considered, and when they were in the studio with Seeed member Peter Fox, they presented their version to him. His reaction, as the two politely put it, was not exactly enthusiastic, but it offered enough constructive criticism to keep them holed up in front of their laptops for months. The final result, faster than "Aufstehn" and enhanced with some buttery-smooth horn sections, was more than worth the effort. [4]

2016-2023

Looking back, the slow pace worked to Kitschkrieg's advantage in some ways, as every single became an event. Instead of working with anyone and everyone, Kitschkrieg looked for muses and found them in Chemnitz MC Trettmann and the rising Hamburg rapper Haiyti. The first two Trettmann albums, "#DIY" and "Trettmann," as well as Haiyti's "Montenegro Zero," were released in close succession – and suddenly Kitschkrieg itself was in the spotlight. The Trettmann song "Grauer Beton" became one of their first anthems. "We still love the song today," says Fizzle. "It tells the story of growing up in East Germany and how difficult it was to adapt to the new system after reunification. In terms of production, it's very interesting and uses the 808 cowbell in a pretty iconic way." Fiji Kris takes over: "It all started with the cowbell sound, with two notes. We retuned it to create a melody, and that's how a chord progression almost emerged on its own."

It's difficult to estimate how successful Kitschkrieg really were at the height of their fame. Their first album under their own name boasted features from some of the best-known names in German hip hop, as well as considerable crossover potential with Nena and Henning-Mey-Kantereit. Their last release with Trettmann, "Insomnia," even featured Herbert Grönemeyer on the guest list. "Montenegro Zero" also boasted a wealth of hits, elicited arguably her best lyrics from the Hamburg native, and ensured that underground hip hop suddenly earned a place on public television. On the other hand, in direct comparison with other local production duos, their sales and streaming figures are rather modest. By comparison, The Cratez from Göttingen have 20 number 1 hits and over 100 top 10 hits to their credit. And yet: The classic Kitschkrieg years up to approximately 2022/2023 have a certain magic that can't be explained by marketable slogans or production features. Before heading to the USA, Kitschkrieg ended their collaboration with their creative partners in Germany, and there's a certain melancholy when those involved talk about this time today. In interviews, Trettmann has mentioned the end of his collaboration with Christian and Christoph in the same breath as the separation from his partner. His first projects with a new production team are still hip-hop at the highest level – but they no longer capture the unique atmosphere of their previous works. But how has Kitschkrieg fared?

Görlitzer Straße 52 in Kreuzberg. (Part II)

It's a dull, gray, slightly rainy day in Berlin, and I've come here to explore this magic and ponder whether Kitschkrieg's odyssey was worth it. Christoph and Christian have already recorded two new LPs—one in England, the other in the US—with a variety of rappers and singers, and the pace of their productions has increased significantly. They haven't completely overhauled their sound, but they have subtly redirected it. The dub references have faded somewhat into the background, trap and even young

le references became more apparent. "Slow Down," with its delicate, floating neo-soul sound, is an absolute highlight in her catalog. Nicole also delivers one of her most beautiful videos, following Maria the Scientist in her convertible through a cool world of cotton wool. At one point, the camera lifts off, and you feel a bit like you're in a dream, weightless, melting and dissolving.

And yet, in direct comparison, the streaming figures for their German productions remain significantly ahead of their international ones. Their most recent project, however, could point the way to the future. Together with British songwriter and singer Dré Six, Kitschrieg have once again created a full artist album for "London Calling," on which both sides contribute with equal passion. "Some of the songs were first created with Dré and his guitar, and we basically remixed them," says Fizzle. "Others, like the title track, first emerged as beats by us. Then we wrote lyrics together and recorded the result." The result combines slow-motion house with psychedelic trance chords, powerful basses with broken beats, and sparkling sequencers with shimmering off-beat accents. The highlight, however, is undoubtedly "Mad about you," whose rhythm track is played primarily on kalimba and handpan and explores fascinating new timbres.

Hamburg producer Farhot once said, "I don't need new ideas. I need new personalities." Perhaps it's the same for Kitschkrieg. The direct personal exchange with the artists, the collaborative development of a song, the ability, if necessary, to discard almost all the vocals or make radical decisions—all of this was a central building block of their success. For Fizzle and Fiji Kris, music must always be a product of love. You don't lose that love when you cross the Atlantic. You always carry it with you. r

Three beat portals in direct comparison

Earn money with Beatstars & Co.

As a hobby beatmaker looking to earn some extra money with their beats, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the countless beat-selling platforms. We'll give you an overview of the most important and best options.

Airbit

On the platform, you can upload beats, sound packs, and stems and add individual license agreements. The terms can also be flexibly customized. An interesting extra:**Buyers can upgrade their license later, for example from an MP3 license to WAV or trackouts**The pricing model is clearly structured: For $8 per month with annual billing or $20 per month, you get access to all features. The free version only allows 20 beat uploads—more of a trial version for serious producers. But the investment is worth it, as the premium features include**automatically generated YouTube and TikTok videos**your beats, the Infinity Store as a separate website, a**Content ID system**for monetization on YouTube and Platinum Rewards, which give you discounts on products from manufacturers like Evabeat or PreSonus. Unlike Beatstars, Airbit focuses more on a focused marketplace without unnecessary extras.

www.airbit.com

Soundee

If you are looking for a less playful platform that is based on **Clarity and data analysis**If you're looking for a more flexible approach, Soundee is an interesting alternative. Its streamlined interface and intuitive operation make it easy to use. You can upload your instrumentals, stems, and sound packs to the platform and sell them using customized licensing models.**The comprehensive analysis tool is the unique selling point of Soundee**It provides detailed insights into listener numbers, sales, and buyer behavior, allowing for a better overview. Soundee offers three subscription models. The free plan allows up to 10 beat uploads, while the Pro plan, for €15 per month with annual billing or €20 per month, gives you unlimited uploads. Additionally, you can**Activate your own website**and gain access to advanced tools. The Zapier integration is particularly interesting, allowing you to automate workflows and even integrate AI-assisted support. Soundee is therefore aimed at those who like things simple, professional, and analytical.

www.soundee.com

Beatstars

Anyone who wants to produce beats and sell them online will sooner or later come across Beatstars. Here you can not only create your instrumentals, but also**Upload sample packs and stems**as well as services such as**Offer mixing and mastering** Buyers can then purchase your self-created licenses. This means you can set the conditions under which your beats can be used. Does the buyer want to purchase the beat exclusively or for up to 100,000 streams? You determine all of this through your own licensing options – including pricing. Beatstars is financed through three subscription models. The Starter option, which allows you to get started right away, is available for around €22 per year. If you want more, you can opt for the Growth package for around €87 per year, which includes the upload of stems and unlimited offers of services and sample packs. With the most expensive model, for €208 per year, you have complete access to all Beatstars features, such as your own website, legal support from the Beatstars agency, and even**a Content ID monetization program**, so that your music also generates income on social media. In addition to the actual Marketplace, Beatstars also sees itself as **Community platform**, where producers can collaborate, exchange ideas, and network. Beatstars also publishes its own playlists and operates a chart system through which individual beats gain additional visibility and can even go viral. Essentially, Beatstars is a hybrid of Instagram, Shopify, and Amazon—but for beats.

www.beatstars.com

When promises turn into frustration

Real rappers vs. AI vocals

This article was originally supposed to be about recommendations for AI-based platforms for generating rap vocals. Instead, it's about marketplaces where you can hire real human rappers. But how did this come about?

Realistic, cutting edge, emotional – these are just a few of the adjectives that operators of AI-based vocal generators use to advertise their services. At first glance, the offerings seem attractive: you can try many of them for free, have a variety of voices to choose from, and even with a paid subscription, you save money compared to using human artists. At first glance, everything speaks in favor of these services. In reality, however, the opposite is often the case...

Poor quality

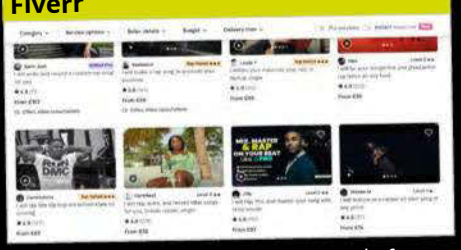
In preparation for this post, I tried various online text-to-speech services, including Eleven Labs, Uberduck, Audimee, and Musicful. Trying to achieve a meaningful, usable result, I spent hours tweaking prompts and markups. I finally gave up: the voices often sounded synthetic, lacked flow and emotion, and the audio quality was substandard. Anyone who has tried such platforms will understand the disappointment.

A question of perspective

I don't want to demonize AI in general. There are certainly good tools out there. However, you should ask yourself what you actually save by using such tools. Because if I consider how much time I have to invest in fine-tuning a prompt, I could probably generate enough income in the same time to hire an artist – who, ideally, would collaborate creatively.

As is often the case, there's no single right way. But that's not what this is about. Rather, I'd like to encourage you to consider the use of AI or booking an artist for your next production from different perspectives to find the most efficient solution for you. You can ask yourself the following questions: Do I want to record a full vocal or just short phrases? Is my production tied to a financial factor? Do I want to implement my lyrics and ideas without compromise, or am I open to input and adaptations? If you decide to go with a real rapper, we recommend the following platforms...

Fiverr

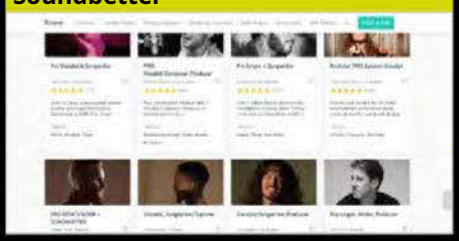


Fiverr is one of the most well-known platforms where creative professionals offer their services. A search for "rapper" yielded over 5,100 results, which you can narrow down using filters for budget, language, and delivery time, among other things. You can also refine your results further using the search function. The providers have the option of providing videos, photos, and audio samples – you should definitely listen to them, as the quality of the offers varies enormously. You can also contact the provider to discuss details before completing your purchase.

Fiverr charges a 5.5 percent service fee. This is calculated for each individual job—even tips. An additional $3.50 is added for jobs under $100.

Further information: fiverr.com

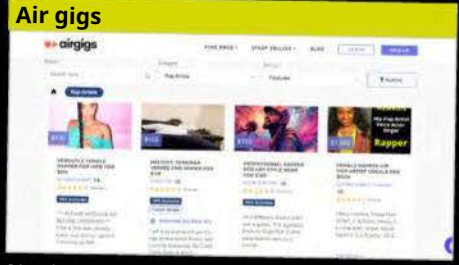
Soundbetter



Soundbetter describes itself as the world's leading marketplace for music production. The platform was acquired by Spotify in 2019 but has been back in the hands of its original founders since 2021. On Soundbetter, you can filter by rapper and genre. What's exciting is that you can also search for sound-alikes, such as "DaBaby," "Post Malone," or "Central Cee." The profile preview also tells you about the artist's ratings, experience, and credits. Further information can be found on the profiles themselves, including delivery time, language, and audio samples. Advertisers can also list their studio equipment and provide an insight into their work and way of thinking in an interview.

Further information: soundbetter.com

Air gigs



Air gigs was founded in 2012 and, according to its own statements, was the first online marketplace for professional studio services. It also offers a variety of services from songwriting to mastering. To find rappers, you can browse the "Rap Artists" category and filter by genre, delivery time, and price range, for example. As with the other platforms already presented, the artists' profiles include audio and video samples, reviews, and a description of the person and their services. Contact options are also available. You can also post your project and see who applies. Postings can also include an audio sample so interested parties can get an impression of the production.

Further information: airgigs.com

Hip-hop dominates Germany's Spotify charts

German rap beats techno

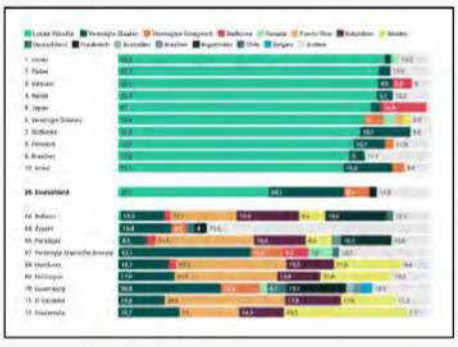
Hip-hop has conquered the German streaming landscape. An analysis of the Spotify Top 200 charts reveals that 73% of German artists' streaming success goes to rappers. Electronic music, in contrast, only accounts for 12%.

German hip-hop is successful because it raps in German about specifically German experiences. Topics range from urban life in Frankfurt and Hamburg to aspects such as migration, identity, and social mobility, which resonate with the country's diverse population.

Hip-hop offers a framework to address topics rarely addressed in traditional German music: migration histories, urban inequality, and cultural identity in a globalized world.

The success of artists like Pashanim (with Afghan roots), Apache 207 (of Turkish heritage), and LACAZETTE demonstrates how hip-hop has become a medium through which Germany's multicultural reality finds its voice. These artists rap in German but draw on experiences that reflect the country's demographic changes.

In a global comparison of music streaming patterns, Germany occupies a mid-range position in terms of local versus international music consumption. Ranked 26th out of 73 countries surveyed, Germany is almost exactly in the global median. It exhibits neither the strong local preference observed in countries like India and Turkey, nor the pronounced international orientation of smaller markets.



Germany in international comparison: Countries with pronounced language barriers and large domestic markets, such as India, Turkey, and Italy, exhibit significantly higher levels of local support, while smaller markets and English-speaking nations tend to show lower percentages.

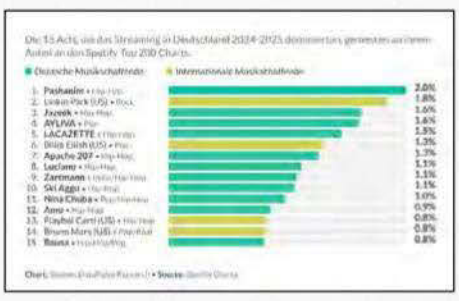
The acts at the forefront of the German hip-hop boom

The leading German acts on Spotify underscore hip-hop's market dominance: Pashanim generates 2.0% of all streaming activity in Germany, while Jazeek (1.6%), AYLIVA (1.6%), LACAZETTE (1.5%), and Apache 207 (1.3%) complete the top five. This concentration demonstrates hip-hop's significant presence in the German streaming market.

This focus contrasts with other German musical traditions. Despite Berlin's prominent club scene, electronic music accounts for only 12% of streams by German acts. Rock and metal genres represent less than 3% of domestic streaming activity, while traditional Schlager music accounts for a mere 0.3% of German music creators' consumption on the platform.

The deeper implications: Cultural patterns

The popularity of hip-hop in Germany represents more than just changing musical tastes; it reveals how the country is processing its current identity. The success of German-language rap offers a framework for addressing social realities that traditional German music has rarely addressed: urban diversity, experiences of migration, and generational change.



Germany's music landscape: Local heroes vs. global stars. An analysis of German artists' performance in the Spotify Top 200 charts shows that 73% of local streaming success is attributable to hip-hop and rap.

Language matters: German rappers are successful because they rap about German experiences in German. This proves that local relevance beats international imitation.

Cultural evolution: Hip-hop has become the medium through which young Germans process migration, identity, and social mobility.

The revealed paradoxes:

Berlin's techno myth: The "techno capital of the world" barely reflects electronic music in its streaming figures; club culture doesn't translate into daily listening.

Munich's contradiction: Bavaria's traditional stronghold consumes international music more than any other German city; tradition and streaming habits diverge.

The disappearance of rock: Legendary acts like Herbert Grönemeyer and Udo Lindenberg together have less streaming influence than individual young rap acts.

Hip-hop as the musical language of Germany

The data tells a clear story: Hip-hop has become Germany's dominant form of musical expression, reflecting urban life, migration, and identity. Accounting for 73% of German music creators' streaming success, rap has evolved from an imported genre to the primary vehicle through which Germans process their contemporary experience.

While Berlin's techno clubs make international headlines, German streaming habits reveal a different reality: one in which urban experiences, multicultural identity, and social commentary find their voice through hip-hop beats and German lyrics.

Germany's position as the 26th country in the world in supporting local music demonstrates how the country maintains a balance between openness to international influences and the development of a distinctly German form of global music. It proves that authentic local expression can flourish in universal formats.

Courtesy of Skoove and DataPulse Research. The full study can be found on the Skoove website [1].

[1] https://www.skoove.com/blog/de/spotify-lokal-vs-global-musik-deutschland/

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TASCAM

Digital Culture: Songwriting and AI

The singularity is here

The latest generative apps have reached a level of quality that impresses even skeptics. Finished songs at the touch of a button—it's a shock that's been announced. What now?by Tobias Fischer

The revolution seemed to have crept in overnight. Dave Malkoff from the CBS Morning Team, a popular American news program, visited YouTuber Rick Beato to get an update on music software. Beato, who is known for his criticism of songwriting farms and the use of AI, first generated a photo of the virtual singer Sadie Winters before the astonished visitor's eyes and ears, prompting a melancholy song-text and then entered it into the current version of Suno. The app generated the song "Walking Away," a gently pulsating mid-tempo synth-pop ballad. When Malkoff played it to some passersby, not one of them suspected it was a prompted performance. Even country songwriter Parker Welling marveled at some points at the artful melodic lines. [1]

The CBS video is impressive, and even Beato himself looks a little overwhelmed at the end when he attests to Sadie Winters' "great voice" and admits that it's "pretty incredible." But for insiders, it's nothing new. Beato discussed almost exactly the same topics in interviews 12 months ago. Even back then, Udio and Suno were capable of creating technically sound, almost human-sounding songs. When I spoke with producer Toby Gad (Beyoncé) in May 2024, he laughed briefly when I expressed doubts about AI's ability to write truly touching songs. He said he'd seen some tools that would soon prove me wrong. The CBS feature proves he was right.

The threshold to AI composers is exceeded – can making music now the machines leave it to?

At the compositional level, software models have long since caught up with humans.

In 1981, composer David Cope was commissioned to write an opera. Cope suffered from acute writer's block and found himself unable to provide the music. Instead of despairing, he programmed an app called EMI - Experiments in Musical Intelligence - which was designed to copy his compositional style and apply it to new pieces. The work on EMI took Cope many years, but once the application was running, he completed the opera in two days. He then fed his program with Chopin, Bach, and the like, and in concert halls, most guests could not distinguish the resulting scores from the originals. Cope's decisive achievement, however, lay not in his software, which was never sold as a commercial product, but rather in his groundbreaking shift in focus of the truly essential questions: What, exactly, defines a compositional style? What distinguishes one composer's work from another's? Only after these questions could be answered was EMI able to produce new Cope scores. [2]

Guitarist, composer, and producer Markus Reuter also uses self-written software for his orchestral, ensemble, and solo instrumental works. In a conversation with me two years ago, he predicted current developments with remarkable accuracy—and provided the explanation right away: "An album like The Cure's 'Disintegration' could have been made by an AI," he said at the time. "It follows clear rules, and you could easily instruct someone to create new music according to these rules, which would be very close to the original. I think that more chaotic, less defined music is more difficult for a machine to create." The Russian composer Prokofiev, who began unconventionally and switched to a conservative style for political reasons, is a good example. "If you try to define him as a brand, it suddenly becomes difficult. The simpler the recipe, the easier it is to use it to cook similar dishes."

So why the sheer astonishment that songs can be generated at the touch of a button?

Perhaps because they violate our idea of what constitutes art. Tangerine Dream mastermind Thorsten Quaeschning, for example, summed up his personal view of AI as follows: “For me, AI often feels like someone copying other people’s diaries and pretending to have experienced it all themselves.” Interestingly, however, many great works have emerged from precisely this act of copying diary entries, and this long before AI was a keyword: Dubstep pioneer Burial was celebrated for music that evoked the gentle depression that after a night of dancing, perfectly sums up the feeling. None of it was "real." Rather, by his own admission, at the time of his first EPs and albums, he had never been to a club and had only imagined all these feelings when his brother told him about his experiences in London's dance halls. Based on these "hallucinations," he became a figurehead of the electronic underground. [3]

What undoubtedly helped with this reception was the fact that Burial's music is deeply felt, dark, and serious. The fact that we don't trust an AI like Suno to do such things has to do with the classic misconception that great emotions and artistically valuable intentions are necessary for great art. Markus Reuter sees it differently. It is precisely a characteristic of 21st-century music that many chart successes simply came from a few tech-savvy nerds tinkering with their devices. Tracks that move us deeply don't necessarily have to be based on a brilliant idea or deep emotion: "Let's assume a few 15-year-olds get together and write dark rock," says Markus. "Their sole intention is to make themselves more attractive to potential partners. But then listeners perceive it as a musical phenomenon. From a simple motivation, something truly beautiful and great has emerged. What I'm trying to say is that you can't judge art solely by the intention behind its creation."

Especially when it comes to music that tops the charts, this statement perhaps needs to be logically reversed: the fewer "deep" emotions that influence the creation process of a song, the better. Country music took a quantum leap in quality when labels began housing their best writers in standardized rooms and scheduling their daily routines around standard office hours. The notorious "writing by committee," in which songs are written en masse in groups of up to 15 writers, is the logical consequence of this approach: In a creative process characterized by the division of labor, everyone contributes the part they are most attuned to. When the finished product is then assembled from many perfect little pieces under the supervision of an experienced producer and in compliance with the above-mentioned rules, the result is certainly a lot of rejects and a lot of mediocrity, but more often than not, something that is superior to "uncompromising" solo visions.

Now, songwriting in teams, despite its bad reputation, breaks the process down into many small Modules are broken down and the human contribution overall is increased.

> AI will give birth to a new type of artist, just like every other groundbreaking technology before it «

The use of AI, on the other hand, does the opposite.

It relocates all these small, individual steps into the notorious black box of the statistical field and brings them back together. What previously required 15 experienced authors now requires only one. One could thus argue—and many IT companies actually do—that this movement further democratizes access to the means of making music. Unfortunately, it's no longer the means of making music that stand in the way of a career in the arts, but rather the channels of its distribution. And here, thanks to AI, the concentration of power will only increase further.

It's abundantly clear that AI will give birth to a new breed of artist, just like every other groundbreaking technology before it. When hardware prices fell in the 90s, for example, it was suddenly no longer classically trained musicians who delivered the most exciting contributions – but simply fans and ravers who were caught up in the wave and, with a great deal of patience, taught themselves the increasingly affordable technologies and techniques. Many of them didn't even know how to play an instrument; laptops and mice became the most common input methods. It will therefore be interesting to see what separates a good music prompter from a bad one. It will also be interesting to follow the impact on copyright law. Strictly speaking, AI compositions still can't be protected. However, I strongly suspect that the most popular prompters will soon feel like the actual authors of the songs – even if their prompts are ridiculously simple. What happens when they no longer accept this inequality?

Markus Reuter realized very early on that the most effective lever was the rulebook. His composition tools create music according to principles that cannot (yet?) be generalized by an AI and thus cannot be copied – they are dynamic rather than rigid. Admittedly, only a few hits will be created with them. Perhaps, for the time being, it will be sufficient for creatives to regain the confidence to develop basic ideas without technological aids. This could mean leaving the devices turned off until an image of the music forms in their mind's eye/ear. Even if it's a simple song with three chords, you're already one step ahead of the AI.r

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uf8CCTItVo; [2] https://computerhistory.org/blog/algorithmic-music-david-cope-and-emi/
[3] https://www.thewire.co.uk/in-writing/interviews/burial_unedited-transcript

Portrait: Raz Ohara

Handcraft

Danish musician Raz Ohara looks back on a long career in various genres and bands. On his new album under his own name, "Memories Of Tomorrow," he places great emphasis on craftsmanship, as every synth was recorded live. He has deliberately avoided loops, samples, and programming. This analog charm and imperfection create a more human electronic album that blends influences from soul, trip-hop, downbeat, and ambient alongside electronica. We spoke with Raz about his work.

Interview: Sascha Blach

Photo: Ishka Michocka

»- - - I'm all about creating everything from scratch myself – with your own hands.-«

Beat /What has your musical career been like so far?
Raz /I started writing songs on guitar and piano at the age of twelve. At 14, I was a member of a hip-hop crew and rapping. At 16, I began blending the two genres, which led me to trip-hop. At 18, I moved to Berlin and discovered electronic club music in all its facets. This led to gigs throughout Europe, the US, and Latin America—where I also spent some time in the rainforest.

Beat /What music has shaped and socialized you?
Raz /My goal is always to make the best music possible – without compromise. Even if you might be "the next big act," making music according to a formula because someone expects something specific is not a solution. I feel a connection with anyone who stands in this tradition.

Beat /On your new album, you recorded all the synthesizers live and deliberately avoided loops, samples, and programming. Can you explain the philosophy behind this? **Raz /**It's about creating everything from scratch with your own hands—with the intention of creating something unique that allows you to express something in your own words. When I work with purchased samples from a library, I know that many other people have probably used them before. That's why I record instruments myself to create my own samples or loops. It's also part of my craft—that's where the fun of producing lies for me. In doing so, I leave my own personal fingerprints on so many levels throughout the entire creation process of a piece. For example, I started by recording on old cassette recorders. From there, I go into the interface and start working with the samples and loops in Logic. Working with vintage equipment is also much more manual than just programming.

on a small display. The workflow is more organic, and the sound usually requires little post-production editing. The sound I want to hear is usually almost there when I record it. On the other hand, when I work with digital gear, I tend to edit it until it sounds almost analog or vintage. My general philosophy is: I record every sound I use myself, because for me, the message and intuition of a song begins right there—not with the idea of lyrics or harmony.

Beat /How deeply do you delve into editing after recording? For example, is quantization at the audio level a no-go for you?
Raz /Nothing is an absolute no-go. It always depends on what the project and the concept require. But the idea of recording with great musicians and keeping post-production editing as minimal as possible has appealed to me more and more in recent years. The scenario of bringing brilliant musicians together to create magic is exactly what I'm increasingly working towards. For example, for my current album project (still in progress), I recorded an improvising jazz quartet in Lisbon. Each musician sat in their own room – to prevent crosstalk and to allow for post-production editing. We recorded dozens of improvisations over the course of a week. I originally intended to create an experimental ambient album, but the group's improvisations were simply outstanding, as was the sound quality of the recordings. In the end, I was able to create two albums from this session – one of them with no post-production at all. For this, I simply select a few takes and have them prepared for stem mastering, and that's it.

Beat /The album information states: "All tracks are songs and can easily be played by Raz on an acoustic guitar." Do you actually write your songs that way—on an acoustic guitar, even though they end up sounding heavily electronic? What does your typical songwriting process look like?
Raz /Yes, I write songs on the guitar. Or I get inspired by a loop I create in a DAW. These days, I often start with improvisations on the piano, sometimes with a single vocal line I come across in everyday life. However, when it comes to electronic or loop-based music, I usually start with the percussion tracks to have a rhythmic foundation. This makes things a lot easier, but can also be limiting. Sometimes, for example, I listen to records to look for loops that contain only sound – and build everything around that one loop. This is exactly how traditional hip-hop music works. The important thing is to different methods to continue experimenting. In other words: As an artist, you have to be aware of your comfort zones so that you can step out of them. And let's be honest: Life is too short to work for the industry. Take your time, don't just deliver!

Beat /Electronic music is often loop-based, while on the guitar you tend to work with harmonies and chords. How about you?
Raz /I like to mix genres. I want to tell a story – sonically and through the productions. You can hear in my music where I've been musically throughout my life. My first two albums ("The Last Legend," "Realtime Voyeur") marked a first chapter. Today, I see myself in the middle of my musical career – with a backpack of 30 years of songwriting and production – and at the point where I'm redefining myself and entering a more mature phase. My next releases might be more conceptual and have clearer storytelling within an album. I'm open to new paths – and I believe my music will become more conscious and considered.

Beat /Nevertheless, your new album has a hypnotic effect in places. Do you have to be a particularly good performer to achieve this if you record everything live instead of looping?
Raz /As for the hypnotic aspect, I'll create an arpeggio as a MIDI track in Logic and then use it to trigger an analog synth. This way, I can record countless takes where I play with the filters. Often, the arrangement of a track is created by the filtering itself, so this process is quite useful. For example, you might start with a strong high cut on the synth track and then play with the cut-off filter throughout the entire track, creating a progression. In this respect, I am already working with a loop—but I record its dynamics live. And yes, when you're playing loops live with your instruments, you do need certain skills, at least to some extent. Fortunately, editing is much easier today than it was 30 years ago when people still recorded with tape machines.

Beat /Do you think your work process is more time-consuming than that of other acts?
Raz /Yes. These days, it's very easy to produce electronic music. Many producers don't even realize that a "sample" was originally something you recorded yourself and then edited for days. Today, a service like Splice is enough. Tomorrow, you might just need good AI software. But that's precisely where I see a lack of originality: when you simply give up what is—or should be—your own craft. Art needs a soul. Art needs suffering. Art needs someone behind a work, a mirror to the world. Art needs someone to give and someone to receive. But what are you giving if it doesn't come entirely from you? If we lose our craft skills, we won't have much left to give. As a writer once said: We share love through our work. In my opinion, we are making ourselves increasingly redundant, we make less sense, we give less meaning to life—by blindly surrendering ourselves to the revolution of new technologies. A few benefit from this. But certainly not culture—nor humanity as a whole.

***Beat /Do you have a set place where you usually produce and certain times of day that work best for you?* Raz /**I work best in the morning. When I realize I can't make music at home alone anymore, it's time to find a new setup outside and find inspiration in a different environment with other people.

Beat /What was your setup for "Memories Of Tomorrow"?
Raz /Mainly vintage equipment: ARP and Moog synthesizers, tape echo delays, organic African percussion instruments, but also classical instruments like piano and guitar.

Beat /The sound is pleasantly warm, soft, and dynamic. Was mixing a big challenge?

Raz /We didn't change much in the mix—it was important to us to preserve the recorded sound. We mainly adjusted the volumes and cleaned things up a bit.

Beat /The title "Memories Of Tomorrow" is actually a contradiction in terms. What's the concept behind the album?
Raz /The title refers—in a spiritual sense—to stepping beyond space and time. From beyond the veils of our matrix, which we experience as humans, one can simultaneously gaze upon the past and the future.

Beat /In addition to your solo project, you've also played in many bands and collaborated with other artists. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of a solo project compared to that?
Raz /It's all about: What can you convey with whom or with which project? So far, I've always written my guitar songs just for myself, but I think I want to change that and collaborate soon with someone who hopefully crosses my path.r

www.instagram.com/razohara

6,000 listeners

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BEHIND THE BEAT

Episode #52

with Anfisa Letyago

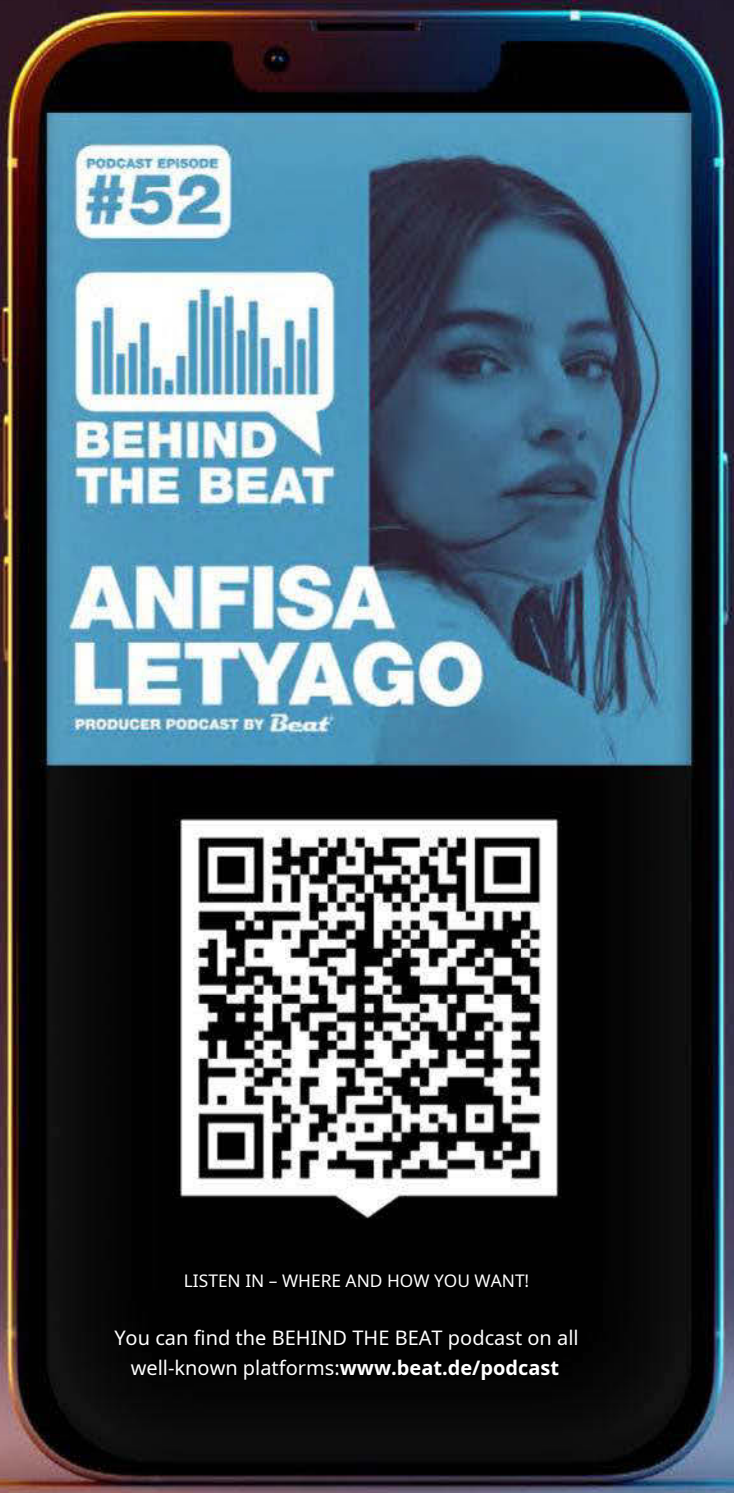
Ice cold and mysterious

In the Behind the Beat podcast, Tobias Fischer invites creatives for an in-depth conversation. This episode is dedicated to Anfisa Letyago, who once again demonstrates her creative versatility on her latest singles.

Nfisa Letyago comes from a family of pastry chefs and cooks. It's no wonder, then, that her love of good food was instilled in her from birth. Is the espresso, which she still prepares by hand with a small Bialetti, a brief distraction from studio work? Or does making music simply fill her free time between coffees? For the Italian-born native, that's not an easy question to answer.

Her diverse work thus offers a very interesting perspective on an eternal debate: Does art come from "ability" or "must"? Letyago began her career as both a DJ and a producer, which gave her a clear view of the functional aspects on the one hand and the transcendental moments of the music industry on the other, of the fine line that separates profession and vocation.

Initially, it was her DJ sets, melodic-technoid and oscillating between ritual trance and unleashed ecstasy, in which she opened up creatively, while many of her early releases



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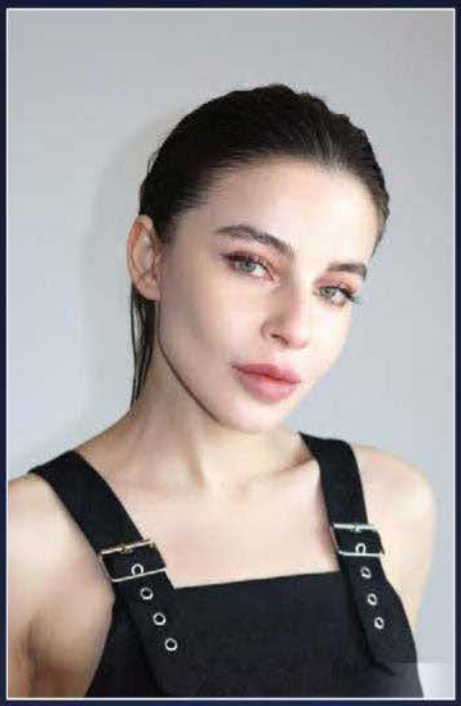
ungs still adhered to a more traditional minimal techno approach. However, Letyago increasingly found her own voice as a producer.

The first hints of her experimental streak were primarily on the B-sides, tracks like "Shot" on the 2019 "Bright Lights" EP, for example, which, with its mysterious string harmonies over an icy, monotonous pounding beat, is reminiscent of Moby's anthemic "Go," which she had already been allowed to remix—a great honor for her as a fan. The "Listen" EP marked a turning point: The tempo slowed down, the structures became more complex, the tone more sensual, and Letyago also began working as a vocalist.

This constant search for new horizons defines her identity as an artist; the constant optimization of sound and arrangement with an extremely simple setup represents her craft-based drive for perfection. Wherever the journey may lead, a coffee is the first step.

www.beat.de/podcast



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FULL VERSION OF THE MAGAZINE

IN FOCUS

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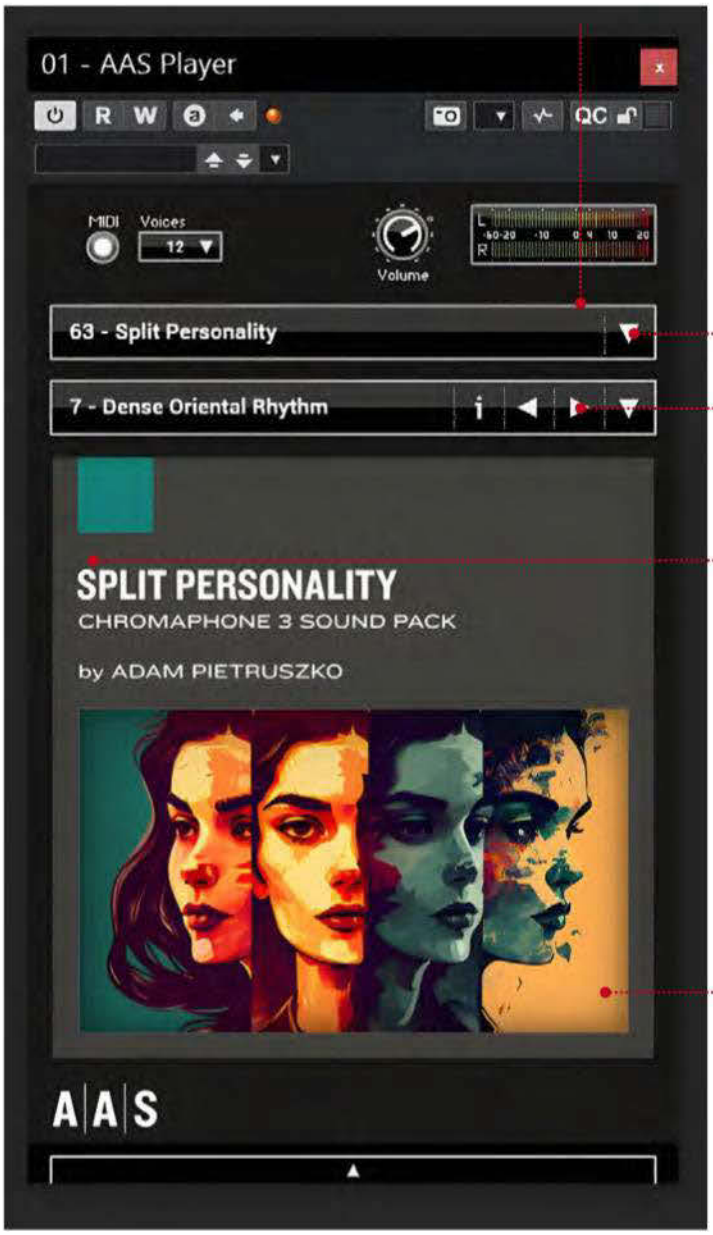
Software highlight: 2 instruments from AAS

Choose freely from 78 packs!

This month, Applied Acoustics Systems is rewarding you twice! Two sound instruments of your choice await you – packed with inspiration for your next tracks. And the selection is gigantic: Choose from 78 packs – whether it's fat vintage synths, trendy club sounds, experimental modular sequences, or otherworldly soundscapes. Your next musical adventure begins here! by Mario Schumacher



From Vintage to Future
The libraries were developed using the latest AAS instruments: Ultra Analog VA-3, Multiphonics CV-3, Chromaphone 3, Lounge Lizard EP-5, String Studio VS-3, and Strum GS-2. This gives you a vast range of sounds—from analog classics to modern digital textures to stunningly realistic acoustic and electric sounds.

Ready to play
In the browser, you can easily switch between the various presets using the arrow keys. Categories like basses, leads, pads, and percussion let you find the right sound in a flash. For even more expression, simply move the modulation wheel.

Your sound center
All 78 sound packs can be used directly in the free AAS Player. Included is the best-of collection Swatches, featuring over 780 presets from 20 renowned sound designers.

Dive even deeper
All sound packs are based on physical modeling, making them particularly expressive and responsive to your playing. If you own the respective instrument plug-in, you can also edit each preset in great detail and expand it into your own creations.

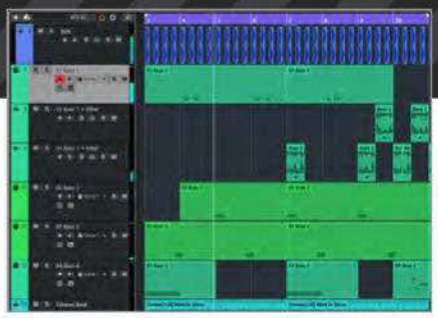
REGISTRATION & INSTALLATION

Register your two AAS sound instruments at www.serialcenter.de. You will then receive a link to register and download your favorites from a total of 78 sound packs.

[1] www.nativeinstruments.com; [2] www.eventide.com; [3] www.arturia.com; [4] www.kickstart-plugin.com; [5] www.applied-acoustics.com

1 Select sound packs

Ready for fresh sounds? Tip: Download the best-of**Swatches**in the free AAS Player and listen to some of the 78 expansions before choosing your two favorites. Our goal: a pulsating melodic techno track. Particularly hot candidates for this are**Patch Alchemy, 30.8676 Hz, Currents**and**Analog Essentials**.1



2 Start with the groove

We'll start with the groove foundation at 122 BPM. For the drums, we'll use samples from the NI Maschine Expansion Indigo Dust [1]. Our bassline will be composed of several sounds. The sound pack**Patch Alchemy**brings with the**Preset 2 – Niobium**a wonderfully crisp bass that is perfect for the genre.1

3 Bass Roulette

Bass alone isn't enough for you? Neither are we. So we're bringing you the presets **25 – Lownoise**as well as **2 – Chainsaw**from the sound pack**30.8676 Hz**comes into play. To begin with, we arrange the sounds into a minimalist sequence, adding a long and dense reverb effect to the bass using Eventide Blackhole [2].1

4 Hypnotic basslines

As the track progresses, a little more groove is needed. A simple bass pattern from Patch Alchemy can be used with the Arturia Filter Mini [3] (presets:**Stick Maker**and **Offbeat**) into a pulsating sequence. Cableguy's Kickstart [4] then ensures that the bass doesn't interfere with the kick. Now it's time for more depth!1

5 Create atmosphere

Simple lead or pad sounds from the AAS expansions are transformed with Blackhole into atmospheric elements. Kickstart can also give these a pulsating rhythm. An insider tip for fresh pads is the extension**Reverence**, from which we get the preset**76 – 90D Vibrations** Wouldn't it be cool to be able to edit the sounds even further?1

6 Own lead

With the full versions of the corresponding synthesizers from AAS [5] you can You can also tweak the patches to your heart's content and transform them into your own creations. For a period of 15 days, you can also use the demo versions. For example, we have created**80s Dance**from the pack**Analog Essentials**created their own melodic techno lead.1

7 Melodic accents

The tuning of the oscillators in the fifth interval evokes memories of tracks by Stephan Bodzin. The lead sound plays a sequence of notes that harmoniously complements the pad. For small melodic accents, the preset**5 – Culture Clash** out of**30.8676 Hz** Add a little delay and you've got another style-typical sound.1

8 Building tension

For a lively melodic techno track, you don't need many additional elements – a few cleverly placed sequences and accents with plenty of reverb and delay are enough to create atmosphere and build tension. The Swatches sound bank offers some suitable sounds, such as**650 – Rhythmic Stereo Percussion**or**612 Vintage Anapluck**.1

9 More drive

The sequence**70 - Strontium Groove**out of **Patch Alchemy**Instantly adds more drive to your track. With Multiphonics CV-3, you can remove individual layers from the sound, allowing it to blend better with your track. Like the other sequences and accents, this one also benefits from some reverb and, if necessary, a kickstart for a pumping sidechain rhythm.r

Power Producer: FL Studio

The Secret of the Brooks Lead

Brooks, who uses FL Studio himself, shapes the sound of Future Bounce with fat leads and powerful bass. Collaborations with Martin Garrix have reached an audience of millions. But one sound stands out: the distinctive lead, heard in "Someday," for example. Learn how to uncover the secret with FM synthesis here.

by Ruben Mantel

Project information

Material: Fruity Loops Studio 2025, Serum 1.2 or Vital
Time required: about 60 minutes, depending on vocal length **Contents:** Sound design of a lead in the style of Brooks. **Difficulty:** Beginners to advanced

1 Sine as a basis

Start with two **sinusoidal** Waves in oscillator A and B. Slightly vary the **Wavetable position** to create subtle differences. For the second oscillator, set the **volume** on **Zero**, as it will later only serve as a modulation source. This base keeps the sound clear, but at the same time is flexible for later harmonics and FM shaping.1

2 Frequency modulation

Open in **Oscillator A** the **Warp option** and choose **FM (from B).** This causes oscillator B to modulate the frequency of A. This creates Brooks' signature glassy sharpness. Pay attention to the mix: Set the **FM controller** to about **20–40%.** As with many things, the dose makes the poison. Too little sounds flat, too much makes the sound chaotic.1

3 Noise and filters

Activate the **Noise module** to make the sound fuller and mix it in subtly. Also, turn on the **filter** and set the **Cutoff** to approx. **2000 Hz** and the response to approximately **10%.** Turn **Drive** and **Fat** to about **15%,** to create warmth and punch. This small dose of noise plus filter work rounds out the sound and gives it character.1

4 LFO for movement

Draw in the **LFO section** one **sine curve**. Deactivate **BPM** and **Anchor** so that you can freely set the rate to approximately **50 kHz** Then route the newly created LFO to the **volume** from **Oscillator A**, as well as the **Noise level** This gives the sound an exciting movement, especially in the higher frequencies, and no longer sounds so clinical.1

5 Effects for printing

Direct the sound in the **mixer** and add plenty of **Distortion** which can be done using the plugin **Fruity Blood Overdrive** Then place the **Soundgoodizer** an extra portion of presence. Also use the **Fruity Parametric EQ 2** to cut some bass and boost the mids in the presence range so that the lead sound can cut through.1

6 Install pitch bends

The heart of the Brooks lead is pitch bends. Automate this **Pitch wheel** in the synth and set **Slides** on **Beginning** or the end of notes for rhythmic tension and momentum. Short slides between notes create the typical Future Bounce vibe. Without pitch bends, the sound remains static and boring, but with them, it comes alive and flourishes.r

Stamps: Presets and Audio demos in the Magazine downloads (see page 9)

Power Producer: Logic

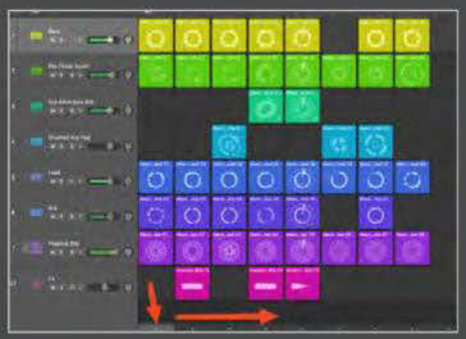
Jamming and live looping

What Ableton did with the Session View in their DAW Live...The workflow with Clip Launcher is now available in almost all DAWs. This has also been the case in Logic Pro since version 10.5. The idea: to think less in terms of fixed horizontal intro-verse-chorus structures and to combine clips and sounds more freely and creatively. This is also what Logic's Live Looper is all about. Let's take a closer look.by Julian Schmauch

Project information

Material: Logic Pro 10.5 **Time required:**30-60 minutes **Contents:**Compose more creatively in Live Looping mode. **Difficulty:**Advanced

More on the topic

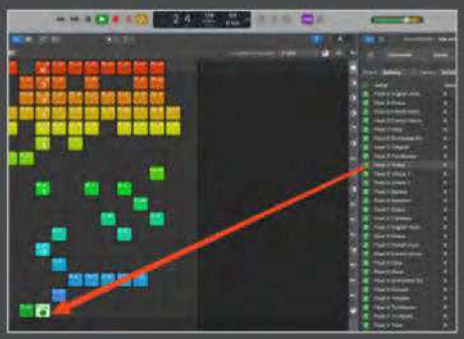


1 Left to Right

With clip launchers like the Live Looper in Logic is the principle of rhythms and melodies to combine, the basis. Unlike in Ableton, the playback direction in Logic's Looper is from left to right. The clips are called cells, and the columns that combine the cells are called scenes, which are triggered sequentially at the bottom of the window.1

2 Templates and loops

If you want to get to know the Clip Launcher workflow, Logic Pro now provides 32 ready-made templates from various genres. These include loops, with pre-set key and tempo. And if you add additional loops from Logic's Loop Browser, they'll be in the right tempo and key.1



3 Own song sketch

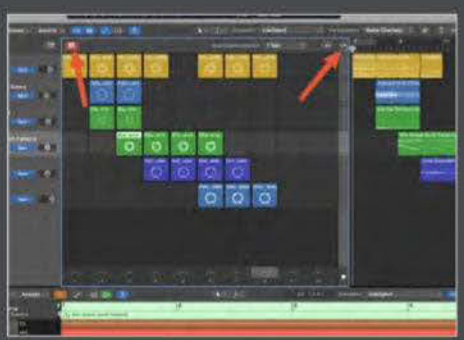
Let's create our own Live Looping project! Create an empty Logic project, switch to the Live Loop Grid (Option+V), and set the tempo. To get started, load a Logic Drummer track from your desired genre for a finished drum beat. Then, using CMD+R, copy the clip to the second column. Add two percussion loops there.1

4 MIDI and audio

Now duplicate the second column (right-click) and add a MIDI track with Alchemy. Recording in Live Looping is tricky; precise timing is required. So pick an Alchemy patch and jam with your MIDI controller until you're confident. Clicking the record button in the cell starts recording the clip.1

5 Edit

If you stumble, activate the **MIDI quantization** in the clip settings. This can This can save you a lot of frustration at the beginning. If you stop recording, Logic will have created a clip that's one bar too long, for example, three or five. Open the editor and change the loop range to two or four. Now continue building the song.1



6 Off to the arrangement

To transfer the clip structure into the arrangement, select all clips and drag it to the right into the Arrangement window. Alternatively, you can activate the **Performance recording** and start the global recording. Logic will now record each column until you start the next one. To listen to the arrangement, click **Lane activation**.r

Power Producer: Cubase

Vocal Chops for EDM & Trap

Do you like cool vocal chops that make EDM, future bass, and trap productions shine? With a vocal loop, Groove Agent SE, VocalChain, and a few effects, you can transform your vocals into a playable instrument. Slice, transpose, and distort: This is how your tracks get that trendy vocal shine.

by Vera Schumacher

Project information

Material: Cubase 14 Artist or Pro **Time required:**from 30 minutes
Contents: Create vocal slices, import them into Groove Agent SE, edit them, and add effects. **Difficulty:**Advanced

1 Import vocal loop

First, drag a vocal loop of your choice (e.g., "Vocals Synthesizer V" from the booklet data) onto an audio track in Cubase. Then open the Sample Editor and activate the hitpoints. Adjust the sensitivity until every syllable or breath sound is clearly detected. This lays the foundation for clean and musically playable slices.1

2 Edit hitpoints

Next comes the fine-tuning. Were all syllables really recognized correctly? If not, manually adjust the set hitpoints or add additional markers. If the markers are correct, click**Create > Slices**. Then load**Groove Agent SE** as a VST instrument and drag the freshly sliced audio part to pad C1.1

3 Groove Agent SE

Each slice is automatically assigned to a pad and is immediately playable. Now you can trigger your vocal samples like drums, rearrange them, or combine them into new patterns in real time via MIDI keyboard. Using the settings shown in the**Pitch**module, the pitch of the slices remains stable, so they can be played like a synth sound.1

4 Transpose

Now you can transpose the pitches of the individual slices in Groove Agent SE to your liking, ensuring they fit perfectly harmonically with your track. Especially in EDM, Future Bass, and Trap, vocals are often transposed more strongly. To emphasize this, you can also use the**Formant** -value of VocalChain's Pitch module.1

5 Formant shifting

Don't worry – in EDM & Co. drastic formant shifting sounds are also welcome and also variations of the**Detune**-value can sound cool. Try values of +12 or
You can also create exciting variations using pitch shifting. You can now play new phrases with the vocal snippets using MIDI notes starting at C1.1

6 Pressure and presence

VocalChainhas everything you need to make your vocal hook even more powerful. We use **Compressor I, EQ 1**and **Exciter**. Something**Reverb** Finally, it provides more spatiality. If you want, you can bring your vocal chops even further forward in the mix with the Cubase plug-in Squasher (preset: "Warm Vocals").r

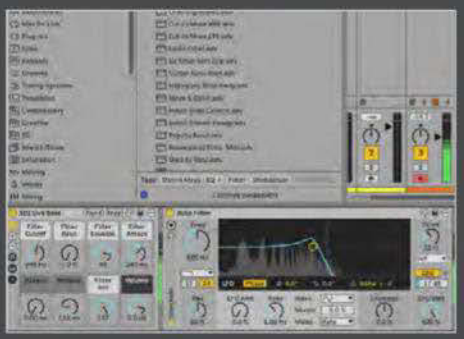
Power Producer: Ableton Live 12

Auto Filter for Sound Design

The Auto Filter, revised in Ableton Live 12.2, goes far beyond simple tasks and, with its creative filter types, opens up entirely new possibilities for sound design. For example, with distorted bass sounds, which often have exaggerated resonance peaks and uncontrolled volume fluctuations. This allows you to specifically shape basses, modulate them rhythmically, and add organic life. You'll learn how it works in this workshop.by Maya C. Sternel

Project information

Material: Ableton Live 12.2 Suite
Time required:30 minutes
Contents: Use Auto Filter as a creative and sound design tool to create distinctive bass sounds, define timbre and character using new filter circuits and filter types, and offer various filter frequency modulation options. **Difficulty:** Advanced



1 Capturing resonances

Load a distorted bass sound and program a simple MIDI clip. Since distorted basses quickly produce harsh resonances and peaks, load an Auto Filter into the track and use it as a tone shaper. Set the filter frequency to 600 Hz, Resonance to 50%, and increase**Drive**to 38% and activate**Clip**. Adjust the output volume using**output**to.1

2 Determine timbre

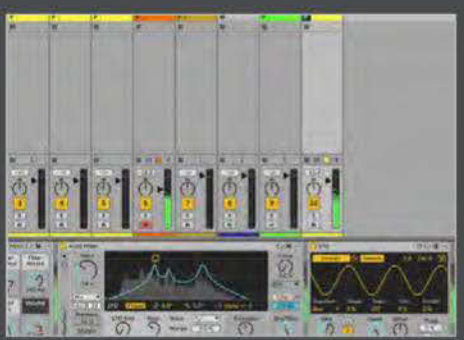
To give the sound more character, try different filter circuits

The SVF model brings more grain to the sound, while DFM produces a rather harsh distortion due to internal feedback distortion. Vary the values for Resonance and**Drive**: Each filter circuit reacts differently and produces different sound colorations.1

3 Filter rides revitalize

Static filter runs can quickly appear lifeless. To avoid this, modulate

Set the filter frequency using the envelope. **Envelope**to 40%. This determines the intensity of the modulation. Next, modulate the bassline rhythmically. To do this, select **Mode Synced**off, set the**rate**to 1/16 and choose for**LFO Amount** 14%..1



4 Vowel character

For a vocal-like bass sound, as often heard in drum 'n' bass tracks, select Vowel as the filter type.**Pitch**to -14. To develop the vowel character, increase**Formant** to 30% and**Morph**to 40%. To modulate the formant, load an M4L LFO device into the track.**rate**to ½ and map the LFO to **Formant**of the auto filter.1

5 Metallic textures

Add metallic overtones to the bass, select Comb as the filter type, set the frequency to 104 Hz, Resonance to 32%, and**Morph**to 70%. Set the LFO Amount to 8% and**rate**to 1/4. For more stereo width, increase the**LFO Phase**to 42%. To modulate the left and right channels asynchronously, select LFO Stereo mode**Spin**.1

6 Sidechain Modulation

For more complex modulations, activate the newly added**Sidechain Envelope Input**. Choose as**Source**the snare of your drum beat. This then triggers the filter movement and, in particular, enhances the groove feel. This creates a bass that breathes rhythmically with the beat and blends organically into the mix.r

Stamps: Presets and Audio demos in the Magazine downloads (see page 9)

Power Producer: Bitwig

Build your dream synth

Who needs plugins when you can easily build your dream synth yourself with Bitwig's The Grid? The modular system has been part of the DAW since version 3 and remains one of Bitwig's highlights and unique selling points. So, if you've always dreamed of building your first self-built software synth sampler monster and don't want to start programming right away, The Grid is the perfect starting point.by Laura Emiliano

Project information

Material: Bitwig Studio 5 **Time required:**30-60 minutes **Contents:** Create your own synthesizer with Poly Grid.
Difficulty: Beginners to advanced

More on the topic

1 PolyGrid

"The Grid" – not necessarily the most creative name for such a powerful tool for Custom instruments, effects, and sequencers in Bitwig Studio. But that shouldn't obscure The Grid's endless creative potential. In the first episode, we'll build our own synthesizer, the likes of which aren't available as a plugin, using Poly Grid.1

2 Modular DIY Synth

That's the name of the device in Bitwig that allows you to build your own instruments. The principle: From what are now 227 (!) modules, you select oscillators, filters, modulators, effects, and more, distribute them on the eponymous grid, and wire them up like a modular synth. Let's start with a simple polyphonic synth.1

3 Osc-Filter-Env

When you load Poly Grid, a union oscillator, an ADSR envelope, and a signal output are already created. If you play on the MIDI keyboard, you'll hear the results directly. What we're still missing is a filter. So, go to the corresponding category in the module browser, select "Low-pass MG," and drag it to the signal output of the Env module.1

4 Filter envelope

Poly Grid automatically connects the new module if you drag it directly to the ADSR output. Now the cutoff should open automatically with each note, with its own envelope. Go to the Envelope section in the browser, drag ADSR directly to the filter's orange modulation input, and turn the knob of the same color next to it all the way up.1

5 Polyphonic and Lofi

To play polyphonic chords, the device needs to be changed from "Mono" to, say, 6 voices in the info panel on the left. An LFO adds a slight vibrato and lo-fi vibes to the sound. Drag the module from the browser to the orange input of the Union oscillator with a maximum modulation intensity of 0.10.1

6 Pad Monster

With a wavetable oscillator, diode distortion, and a chorus effect behind the filter, you can now build the ultimate synthwave pad synthesizer. Your imagination is almost limitless, except for the CPU. Don't forget to save the device as a preset, so you can continue to develop it at any time—or even create music with it.r

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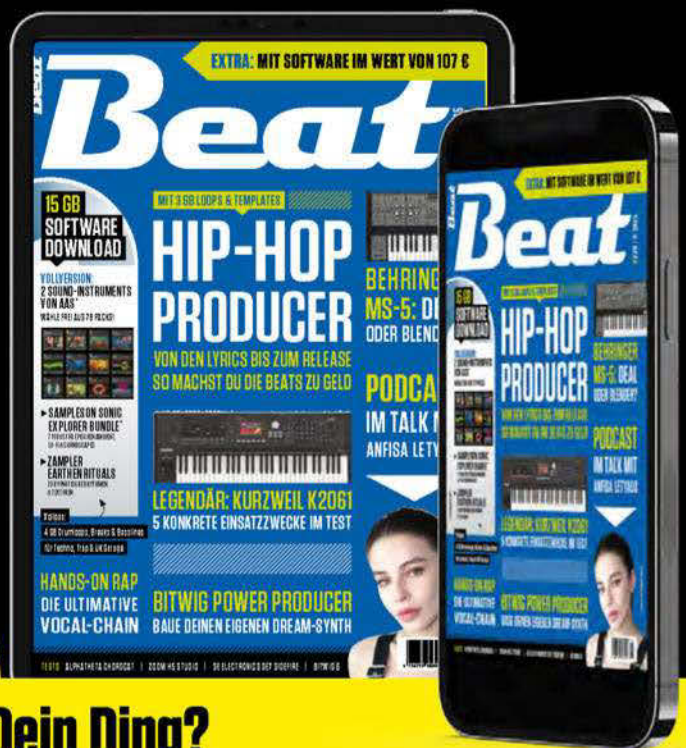

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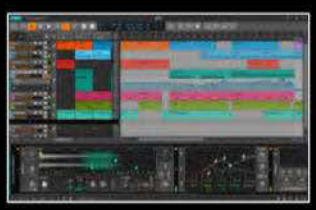

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Loopcloud

// Bitwig Studio 8-Track Get into the creative flow right away: The Keypad Pro is fully integrated into the 8-track version of the Bitwig Studio DAW – with plug & play, a large sound and plug-in package, and an ultra-fast workflow.

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Test:Bitwig Studio 6

When Bitwig 5.3 was introduced, the Berlin-based DAW developer promised big things with the next update, including improvements to the arrangement and automation workflow. With version 6, they're showing what they meant. A new look, completely redesigned modulations, a global key—what an update!by Laura Emiliano

Features

- Modular DAW
- Automation workflow: Clips, new tools
- High-contrast GUI
- Global key: Determine the root key and key gender for all MIDI clips,
- Layer Editing
- Automatic backup of DAW projects from older versions

Facts

Manufacturer: Bitwig
Web:bitwig.com
Distribution:website
Price:399 euros (Bitwig Studio), 199 euros (Bitwig Studio Producer), 99 euros (Bitwig Studio Essentials)

- JFaster and more in-depth automate fender
- JMIDI editing
- JGlobal key for harmonious Compositions
- JAutomation clips in Clip Launcher

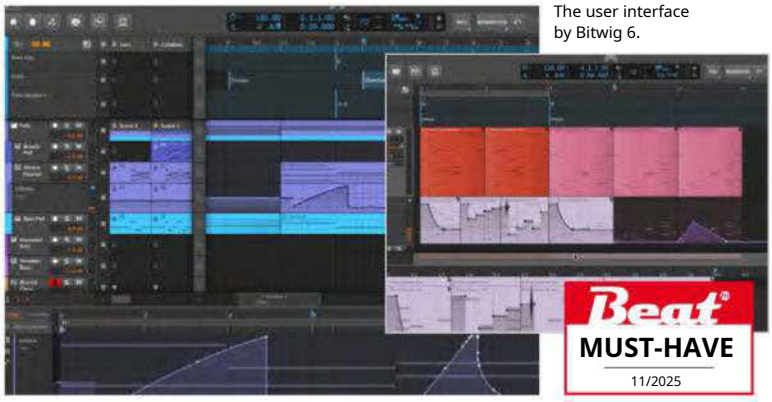
Sound:
Operation:
Price-performance:
In total:

Alternatives

Ableton Live
599 euros
ableton.com

FL Studio
539 euros
image-line.com

Steinberg Cubase
579 euros
steinberg.net



The user interface by Bitwig 6.

As a modular DAW, Bitwig has gained an ever-growing fan base in recent years with The Grid and its complex modulation options. As the number of users grew, so did the number of requests and feature suggestions, especially regarding the somewhat limited capabilities of more traditional production workflows. The DAW increasingly found itself at a crossroads: Should it dig deeper into the modulation niche or open up to the broader market? With Bitwig Studio 6, it's moving toward the mainstream.

Long-awaited features

Opening the first beta version of Bitwig Studio 6, the new look immediately catches your eye. Everything has higher contrast, the background is darker, and the animations when moving clips or adjusting windows are smoother. This is due, among other things, to AVX2 support for improved rendering. Owners of older computers will need to be on the lookout, because anyone using a CPU without AVX2 support (built before 2011) will no longer be able to use the DAW in version 6. So, before updating, check whether your older production machine supports AVX2.

One might also wonder whether automation plays such a big role in a DAW like Bitwig, which is brimming with modulators. Everything is modulated automatically anyway. Especially for volume automation or in general, when things get more subtle in mixing, Bitwig's modulators aren't the way to go. They're not good at subtle, song-wide effects.

Now, similar to FL Studio, there are dedicated automation clips. These can be edited in the editor and even triggered in the Clip Launcher like audio and MIDI clips. Setting and editing automation points in these clips (or, as before, in automation tracks) is now faster and easier.

But Bitwig wouldn't be Bitwig if they didn't add their own twist here. For example, the Spread function, which was previously only available for MIDI notes, can now also be applied to automation points. This allows each automation point to vary to a different extent on each clip run. This allows for much more organic automation. Furthermore, automation clips can be reused in the Segments and Curves modulators. Brilliant!

Alias Clips & Global Key

These two new features, Alias Clips and global key, have been integrated into DAWs like Cubase and Logic for ages. So, this is where you catch up with the DAW mainstream. You can now select a global key in the title bar. Determine the root key, then choose the desired key from 23 scales, such as major or minor. Now, let's For example, you can color the key notes in each MIDI clip for better orientation and mark the notes that are not in the key.

The new Note FX Key Filter+ also helps shift notes from MIDI clips that aren't in the same key as the current key. And those more versed in harmony theory and enjoy switching between keys can also do so (unlike in Ableton) in the new global automation track.

Alias clips, on the other hand, are a blessing for large DAW projects with countless copies of individual clips. Bitwig recognizes all exact copies of a MIDI, audio, or automation clip as alias clips on command. If you change the "original" clip, all aliases will adopt the same changes. Version 6 also offers improved options for editing multiple MIDI clips simultaneously, known as layer editing. This is very useful if, for example, you want to align the kick and bass notes.

Conclusion

As a Bitwig fan from the very beginning, with a background in techno and a broken Ableton heart, I have to say that I haven't been this excited by a DAW update in a long time! And that's despite not including a single new instrument, effect, or modulator, as has almost always been the case so far. Bitwig Studio 6 is a real statement. And don't get me wrong: there's always room for improvement. There's no such thing as the perfect DAW. MIDI-DI comping, creative effects, video support, and so on. But BWS 6 does so much right that you'll be far too busy jamming, producing, and discovering to miss it all.r

More on the topic

Test:GForce Halogen FM

Since the 1980s, FM synthesis has been considered one of the most complex techniques ever. The results were sonically fascinating, but the operation was daunting. With Halogen FM, GForce aims to make the power and character of FM sounds accessible without having to wade through manuals or diagrams.by Jan Wilking

Upon launching the plug-in, the clear and modern interface immediately catches the eye. Instead of an overloaded parameter jungle, Halogen FM presents itself with a tidy interface structured by clever color coding: Operator 1 glows in fresh mint green, Operator 2 in vibrant magenta. Between them is a central visualizer that displays the waveforms and modulation behavior. This is not only visually appealing, but actually helps in understanding the sound generation process.

The design is intuitive: You have direct access to important macro controls such as timbre, envelopes, modulation depth, and effects. At the same time, you still have the option to go deeper and edit individual parameters in detail. Thus, Halogen FM bridges the gap between beginner-friendliness and professional sound design.

Architecture and engine

Under the hood, a minimalist yet effective architecture with two operators works. This may seem spartan compared to the six or even eight operators of classic FM synthesizers, but this limitation is precisely what makes it so appealing. Instead of drowning in endless combinations, the focus is on the essentials: the interaction between carrier and modulator, which is complemented by ring modulation for additional timbres.

The macro controls allow you to quickly make sound changes without having to delve deeply into technical details. However, if you prefer, you can also use full parameter access and manually adjust, for example, envelope times, operator ratios, or LFO settings.

Workflow and creativity

What's impressive in daily use is the seamless workflow. Many FM synthesizers invite long tinkering sessions, which can easily lead to lost time. Halogen FM, on the other hand, delivers instant results.

The focus is on the color-matched Visualization of the Sounds that additional parameters can be supplemented.

nisse. Within a few minutes, you can create sounds that fit seamlessly into a track.

The Spark Engine, a kind of intelligent random generator, is particularly well-engineered. Completely new patches can be created with a single click. The Spark function invites you to explore soundscapes you might never have created yourself. Unlike many other randomization functions, however, the result is surprisingly musical. The Spark button produces sounds that can be used immediately or as a starting point for further fine-tuning. If you want to leave certain parameters untouched, you can lock them in place with the Freeze function—for example, retaining a certain basic sound while remixing other aspects of the sound.

Presets and sound

Even without any experimentation, Halogen FM delivers an impressive arsenal of sounds. Over 320 presets are included, covering a wide spectrum: airy pads, metallic textures, glassy plucks, and atmospheric soundscapes. Particularly powerful are the flat and textural sounds, reminiscent of the great FM synthesizers of the past, but refined with a modern touch.

Less of a focus, however, is on classic bass or lead sounds. While these can also be created, Halogen FM clearly demonstrates its greatest strengths. It excels in experimental, expansive, and metallic soundscapes. The instrument is a true treasure trove, especially for ambient, electronica, or sound design for film and games.

Conclusion

GForce has succeeded in elevating FM synthesis, once considered overly complicated, to an accessible, inspiring level. Instead of drowning in parameter lists, you get an instrument that immediately inspires experimentation. The combination of a clear user interface, intelligent spark generator, and a solid sound engine results in a workflow that appeals to both beginners and experienced sound tinkerers.

Of course, Halogen FM isn't a replacement for a full-featured FM synthesizer, but it can quickly deliver great results. For anyone who's been at odds with FM, Halogen FM is an invitation to rediscover the approach. And for sound designers, the Spark button is a true goldmine. A compact, creative, and characterful synth that frees FM synthesis from its complicated baggage.r

More on the topic

Features

- Software synthesizer
- FM synthesis with 2 Operators
- Macro controls
- Parameter random ization
- Reverb effect
- over 320 presets
- Standalone, VST2, VST3, AU, AAX

Facts

Manufacturer:GForce
Web:GForcesoftware.com
Distribution: Website, specialist retailers
Price:79 euros

- JIntuitive operation
- JClear GUI
- JBeginner-friendly
- JMusical Spark Engine
- JFreeze function
- JExtensive Preset offer
- JGreat atmospheric Sounds
- nBasses/Leads missing some pressure

Sound:
Operation:
Price-performance:
In total:

Alternatives

Sugar Bytes Aparillo
99 euros
sugar-bytes.de

Waves Flow Motion
34 euros
waves.com

Dawesome Cyclops/Myth
from 0 euros
dawesomemusic.com

New Synths & Software

by Vera Schumacher

AAS

Multiphonics CV-3

The first version of Multiphonics CV already scored highly with its clear operation and accessible modular concept, but the third generation now brings significant enhancements: polyphony, physical modeling, FM, and MPE. This clearly sets CV-3 apart from other virtual modular systems such as Softube Modular or Cherry Audio Voltage Modular. While these primarily pursue classic subtractive approaches, AAS delivers a unique touch with the new FM module and physical modeling components. The range now includes over 50 modules – from classic oscillators, filters, and sequencers to physical modeling components, FM operators, effects, and visualizers.

The FM oscillator with three operators instantly delivers shimmering 80s digital sounds, while the modeling modules bring organic timbres to the rack—a blend you'll only find here. Great: With just one click, you can now transform any patch into a polyphonic instrument, ideal for chords, pads, and complex textures. The factory library has grown to over 550 patches and covers both synth and effect sounds. This makes the CV-3 not only a suitable experimental field for sound designers, but also an inspiring tool in everyday studio work.

Conclusion

Multiphonics CV-3 isn't just another "me-too" modular system, but a standalone kit with character. Thanks to physical modeling, FM, and MPE, it delivers sounds that sound different. – while remaining beginner-friendly and resource-efficient. When using MPE controllers, the presets unfold an expressive power that goes far beyond the classic modular.

Developer:AAS
Web:applied-acoustics.com/
Price:$149, plus 4 sound packs: $185
Format:VST2, VST3, AU, AAX, Standalone

Evaluation:

Sugar Bytes

dialect

With Dialekt, Sugar Bytes has developed a groovebox that's not just focused on fast beats, but also offers a complete production environment. Eight tracks form the core: three drum tracks, three monophonic synths, a sampler/slicer, and a four-voice chord synth. What's special about Dialekt is that each step stores all synth parameters, so a completely new sound can be created with each new step. If you move a step, the entire sound moves with it.

The range of sound sources is broad. 28 engines are available, from classic oscillators to wavetables and FM to more experimental models. Particularly exciting are the physical modeling synthesis models like the Resonator or the 3D Oscillator, which produce metallic, organic tones. A truly unique selling point compared to other groovebox plug-ins. There are also engines like Talky, which produces vowel-like formants, or Choir, which works with vowel filters. Those who prefer samples will find a tool in the Slicer track that generates up to 32 slices from a 10-second sample and even offers a recording function.

The user interface is divided into seven pages: Pattern, Synth, Memory, Song, Mixer, Effects, and Settings. Steps are set, copied, or randomized on the Pattern page. You can get more involved on the Synth page, where filters, envelopes, LFOs, and modulation are available for each track. You decide whether a move affects only the current step or the entire song. This is useful, for example, if you want to shorten all the hi-hats without destroying the dynamics. The downside: One wrong click can quickly change more than you'd like. Thankfully, there's an undo/redo function. In the Memory area, all patterns, parts, and effects are displayed as cells. Here, you can copy or swap them by simply dragging them, randomize elements, or rearrange entire parts. Song mode allows you to chain up to 16 parts, set repeats, and automate mutes.

ver: Sequencer and sound data can be loaded separately, which opens up new combinations when exchanging presets.

The song randomizer is especially fun. At the touch of a button, it shuffles sounds, chords, or entire arrangements—sometimes house-influenced (Volt), sometimes dub (Tuff), sometimes hip-hop (Hips). Parameters can be specifically included or excluded, so that, for example, only the chords or sounds are shuffled while the drums remain the same. This often results in surprisingly harmonious track ideas.

However, Dialekt isn't entirely without its quirks: The multitude of pages and editing modes makes getting started a bit clunky, especially since the preset browser is hidden away on the song page. This initial hurdle is quickly put into perspective, as Dialekt has a lot to offer in terms of sound and functionality: In addition to the engines and samples, eight integrated performance effects add movement. TapeStop, LoFi, Phaser, and Chorus can be played in using X/Y pads or automated in the FX sequencer. And, of course, a random function is also included. Delay and reverb are managed as sends in the mixer, supplemented by a master compressor. Thanks to multi-outputs, all tracks, including effects, can be mixed individually in the DAW, and audio and MIDI export are also directly integrated.

Conclusion

Dialekt isn't an instant tool for high-gloss productions, but rather a creative toolbox that consistently inspires with original ideas. The step-oriented sound design, genre-based randomizer logic, and unusual engines make the plug-in an inspiring groovebox for anyone who wants to explore beats beyond programming. Anyone who enjoys shaping musical structures from structured chaos will find Dialekt a sparring partner capable of delivering both sketches and fully developed tracks—and clearly distinguishes itself from the competition.

Developer: Sugar Bytes
Web:sugar-bytes.de
Price:99 euros, iPad: 39 euros, iPhone: 10 euros
Format:VST2, VST3, AU, AAX, Standalone

Evaluation:

ZUM-2
USB MIC

Auch erhältlich:
ZUM-2 USB PODCAST MIC PACK

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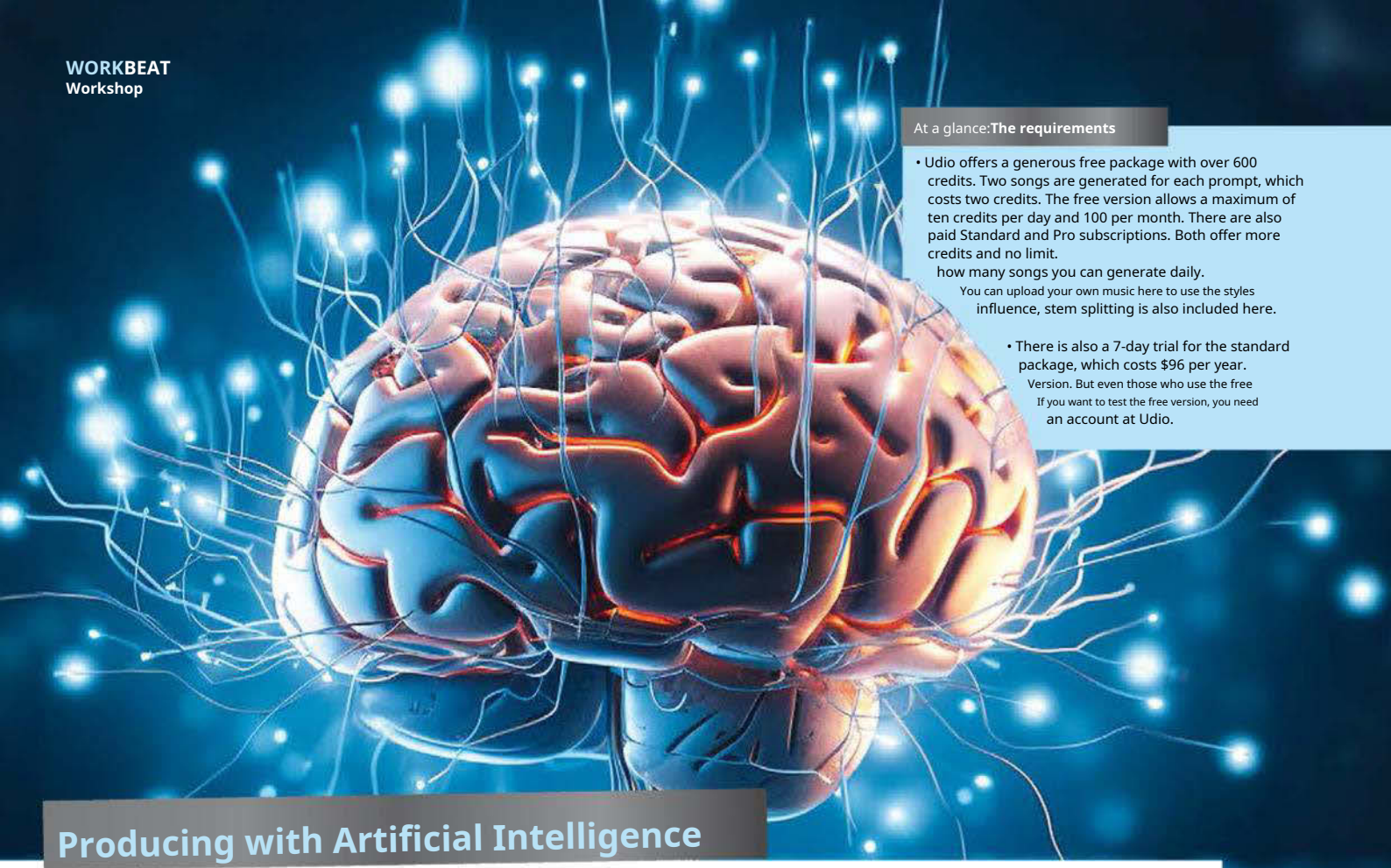

At a glance: **The requirements**

- Udio offers a generous free package with over 600 credits. Two songs are generated for each prompt, which costs two credits. The free version allows a maximum of ten credits per day and 100 per month. There are also paid Standard and Pro subscriptions. Both offer more credits and no limit.
how many songs you can generate daily.
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influence, stem splitting is also included here.
- There is also a 7-day trial for the standard package, which costs $96 per year.
Version. But even those who use the free
If you want to test the free version, you need
an account at Udio.

Producing with Artificial Intelligence

Create unique loops & samples: Free with UDIO

Over the past two years, the number of AI music generators has exploded. Suno and Udio are the two market leaders. Entire songs can be created from so-called prompts. Anyone who wants to can give up music production and learn prompting. Much more exciting, however, is the ability to create samples, especially loops and acapellas, that aren't available in any sample pack. In the search for unique sounds, the AI tool offers a whole treasure trove of new sounds.

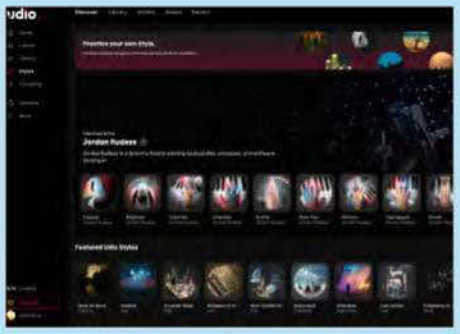
by Laura Emiliano

The first version of Udio went live on April 10, 2024, almost four months after Suno AI.

Due to their proximity in time, as well as the quality of AI music, the two tools are often compared and placed on a par. The idea: Using a prompt, i.e., a command like "trap, evil 808 synth, mysterious, female rap," the music AI produces an entire song in just a few minutes.

If you're working with lyrics, Udio also produces songs with vocals. If you're feeling really lazy or cautious, you can even let the AI generate the lyrics, specifying a maximum of one theme. Two suggestions are generated per prompt round, and it usually takes no more than one to two minutes from prompt to finished song.

Either short 32-second song snippets or 2:11 long songs can be generated from a prompt. Both have



Then you have the option to extend the song using "Extend." Here, you can take Udio in a new direction by modifying the prompt or even adjusting detailed settings like the BPM (only in the paid version).

To set the expectations: in terms of quality, Udio comes close to the highly polished

The AI monster Suno doesn't quite measure up. Especially when the AI generates its own song lyrics, they are often grotesquely bad compared to Suno or ChatGPT, especially if the lyrics are in German. If you're looking for songs with vocals, it's recommended to work with your own lyrics or lyrics generated by other AIs.

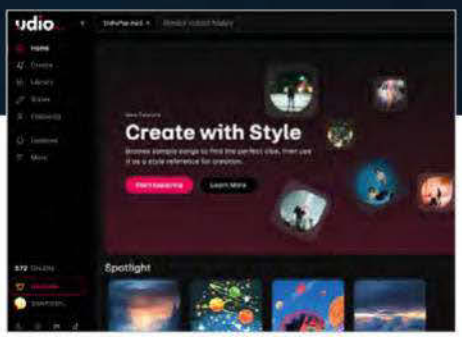
AI-generated music – what for?

Sure, Splice offers millions of samples, and the internet is full of excellent sample packs. But how do you keep track of them all? And make sure someone else isn't already using a loop?

Tools

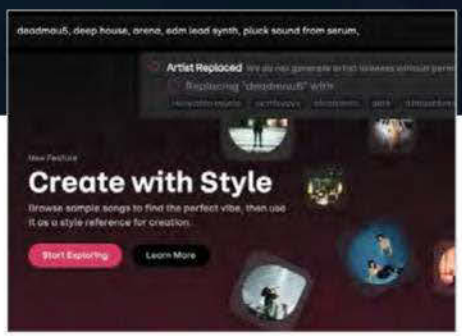
Apps like Udio offer the ability to create sounds and loops that no one else has, with the right prompts. A helpful creative tool these days.

More on the topic



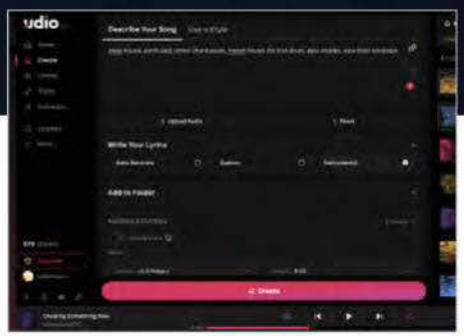
1 Production Assistant

Profitably using a music AI like Udio for your own productions can yield completely new ideas and unexpected results. At no point am I advocating for prompting entire songs and releasing them unchanged, because then what would be the point of the workshop (or the entire booklet!)? It's all about loops.[1]



2 No Artist

The right prompt is crucial. One of the basic principles of prompting commercial music AI is that you can't mention artists or bands. For example, if you use "Deadmau5" or "David Guetta" as part of the prompt to make it clear what musical direction you want to take, Udio will suggest similar genres instead.[1]



3 The More The Better

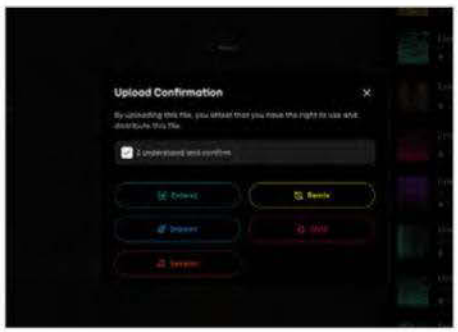
Generally speaking, the more detailed the prompt, the more you describe the mood, sounds, and vibe, the better and more creative the results will be. The prompt "deep house, synth pad, minor chord pluck, French house, fat kick drum, epic chords, slow filter envelope" provided me with two very useful clips for further editing.[1]

4 Details, details

Another important thing: Before generating, select "instrumental"—that is, without vocals. If that's not enough for you, you can use "Advanced Control" to specify the BPM, the position within the song, or even genres to avoid. After clicking "Create," it takes about 90 seconds for Udio to produce two 32-second song suggestions.[1]

5 Stems for download

Assuming one of the two songs features a lead or bass synth you like, you can then download individual stems—just the drums or bass—from the download menu, in addition to the entire track. This way, you'll get a sound that's guaranteed not to be found in any sample pack or on Splice.[1]

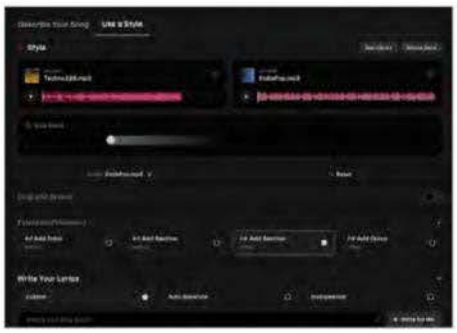


6 Expand your own songs

The second way to creatively use a music AI like Udio without being lazy and producing nothing yourself is to expand your own songs. This can help with one of the biggest producer pitfalls: getting stuck in a loop. Export a short track idea as a WAV from your DAW and import it into Udio via "Upload Audio."[1]

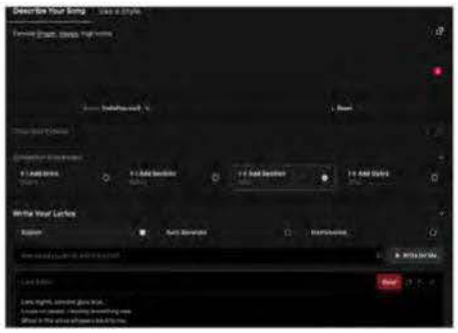
7 Extend, Remix, Style

Now you can choose whether Udio should extend the loop, remix it, or use it as a stylistic basis for a new song. While Extend doesn't always deliver useful results, it sometimes delivers something truly surprising that can quickly get you out of the loop trap. And this isn't about simply adopting Udio's suggestion![1]



8 Blend the Tracks

It even goes a step further: Udio allows you to use the blend function
Mixing two songs as templates. Blending a deep house track with a touch of heavy metal or jazz (only original tracks, no commercial ones are allowed) can produce wonderful mashups, new ideas, and unexpected breaks.[1]



9 Songwriting partner

Udio also provides excellent support for developing vocal melodies. You need
An instrumental and the lyrics. Using the Extend function, the lyrics, and a corresponding prompt (e.g., "Female Singer, Happy, High Voice"), the AI will suggest two ways to sing the lyrics to the instrumental—perfect for new vocal ideas![r]

Zampler plug-in, soundset, audio demo and MIDI data: Download see page 9

Zampler & MPC Expansion: Earthen Rituals

Hypnotic rhythms & endless soundscapes

Whether in spiritual rituals or simply in the relaxed everyday life of late summer, the power of music is at work everywhere. The new Zampler expansion, Earthen Rituals, offers the perfect foundation for creating your own sound rituals. In this workshop, you'll learn how to use them to produce dreamy ambient chillout music. For switching off, deepening your mind, or simply enjoying yourself.by Ruben Mantel

78 HYPNOTIC RHYTHMS & ENDLESS SOUNDSCAPES

Earthen Rituals blends hypnotic, trance-like bells and organic percussion with constantly evolving pads. This creates a unique sonic palette—from crystalline clouds to angular, insect-like textures—that blends artificial soundscapes with an organic, wooden feel. Always in motion, always rhythmic. This is what infinity sounds like! To simplify experimentation and creating your own sound rituals, all patch combinations are also included as individual sounds! **www.zamplersounds.com**

Facts

EARTHEN RITUALS for Zampler:

- 3.7 GB sound bank
- 78 patches
- 26 hypnotic soundscapes 26 constantly changing pads
- 26 trance-like bells and percussion
- 1,014 samples

EARTHEN RITUALS for Akai MPCs:

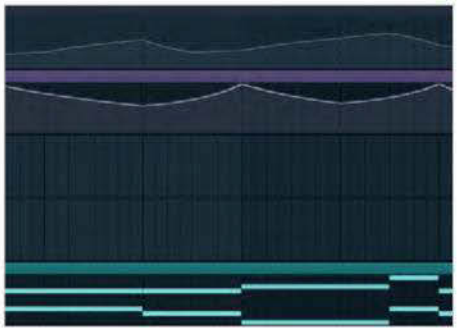
- 1.8 GB sound bank
- 78 patches
- 26 hypnotic soundscapes 26 constantly changing pads
- 26 trance-like bells and percussion 3
- 90 samples
- Compatible with Akai MPC One, X, Live, Live mkII, Force, Studio, Touch, Renaissance, Key 61, MPC Software 2 & MPC Beats

1 Natural chords

Start with a slow pace of approx. **60 BPM** or **120 BPM at halftime**. As a foundation, flat sounds such as **017: CMB Meet At The Sea** This not only delivers a soft, wide sound, but also ear-pleasing waterfall sounds. Record long, sustained **Chords** that create a relaxed, open basis for the track.1

2 Ups and downs

Condense the harmony by **two** more **Layer** added: one for **deep fundamental tones** and one for **higher accent notes** This creates a rich frequency spectrum that fills the song without sounding overloaded. Keep the balance in mind: The sounds should sound related, but still have subtle differences that create tension.1



3 Breathe easy!

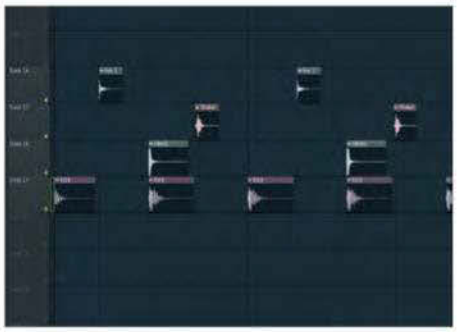
Use **Cutoff automations** to allow the track to breathe. Do not draw abrupt jumps in the automation curve, but rather soft, **wave-like curves**, which transition smoothly from one chord to the next. This creates a natural pulse that makes the surfaces appear organic and lends the entire arrangement a calm vitality.1

4 Earthy percussion

For subtle rhythm, use percussive sounds, such as the preset **025: CMD Junglistic**. Place under **Amp Envelope Sustain** on **zero**, with **short decay** and **Release** and use it to create a minimalist, catchy pattern. Then vary and automate parameters like decay or pan so that the percussion breathes and never seems static.1

5 Melodic accents

A percussive, plucky sound with a clear tonality is ideal for inserting small melodic fragments. Create a **short melodic pattern**, which varies slightly and emphasizes certain passages. These subtle accents add color to the song without destroying the calm overall mood. Here, as in so many other cases, less is more.1



6 Carrying drums

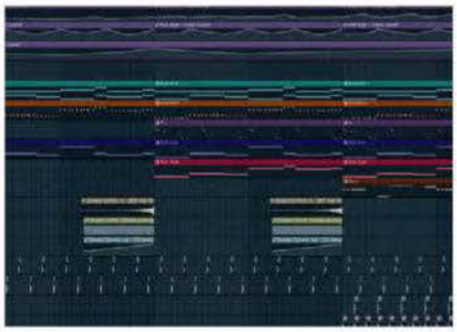
The drums should **soft** and **reserved** Use a gentle **kick** on **every count**, a subtle **Snare** on **2** and **4** as well as light **Hi-hats** or **shaker** in between. The pattern remains simple but carries the groove. Avoid aggressive transients so that the drums form the rhythmic foundation but aren't the focus.1

7 Driving bass

For the bass we recycle the **Preset 054: SY Billow** by simply playing it very low. The bass should not dominate, but should subtly drive the song forward. Place the notes so that they **kick** dance around and complete the groove. Also, orient yourself on the **rhythm** the **Percussion** and the **Harmonies** the **Pads**.1

8 Effects for transitions

Seamless transitions are a must for an ambient track. **Riser** as well as **Downlifter** out of **Noise** are perfect for this. You can also create risers yourself, for example, by **To record** a strong **faded** Sounds from the track and then reversed. This creates effects whose timbre perfectly matches the track.1



9 arrangement

Development occurs through **reduction** or **Add** of elements. Drop pads, bring back percussion or **vary chords** subtle. Even small melody changes keep the ear attentive. Also work with **Automations** for various parameters to shape dynamics. This keeps your ambient track exciting.r

Test:Zoom H5studio

Can a portable recorder truly deliver studio-quality sound while being more robust, flexible, and reliable than its predecessor? Huge small-diaphragm microphones, modular capsules, and six simultaneous channels sound like "overkill to go." How much of this translates to practical use—and where does the H5studio demonstrate its unique selling points?by Jan Wilking

Features

- Portable recorder
- Interchangeable microphone capsules
- 24-bit / 96 kHz
- up to four audio tracks
- Memory cards up to 32 GB
- 2 mic/line inputs
- Phantom voltage and Pad
- Internal effects
- tuner and metronome
- M/S decoding
- internal stereo mixdown
- Normalize, Divide and Trim Edit
- integrated speaker

Operating time approx. 15 h

Facts

Manufacturer:zoom
Web:www.zoomcorp.com
Distribution: Sound Service
Price:389 euros

- JEasy to use
- JStudio sound quality
- Jversatility
- nNo direct wind-protection for the microphones
- nPlastic housing

Equipment:
Sound:
Price-performance:
In total:

Alternatives

Tascam DR-40X
177 euros
www.tascam.eu

Rode NT-USB+
189 euros
www.rode.com

We took a closer look at the H5studio and revealed you whether it is the new standard for mobile recording.

The Zoom H5studio is the evolution of the classic H5 handy recorder. With a new focus on transparent sound quality and maximum dynamic range, the H5studio aims to breathe new life into the portable recording scene. The 19.4 mm small-diaphragm microphones built into the robust recorder are immediately striking – according to the manufacturer, they are the largest mics ever built in this class. This allows recordings up to 140 dB SPL with a truly impressive dynamic range of 132 dB thanks to F-Series preamps and dual A/D converters. However, it shouldn't be too windy, as the large microphones offer no direct wind protection and therefore mercilessly pick up noise.

Operation is intuitive

Each channel has its own gain control, a color LCD for waveform monitoring, a look-ahead limiter, and RF shielding. Six channels (four individual tracks + stereo mix) can be recorded simultaneously at up to 192 kHz.

One advantage that shouldn't be underestimated in practice, given the significant level fluctuations in mobile recordings, is 32-bit float with dedicated gain controls. Thanks to the increased headroom, you don't have to worry about clipping or excessive noise when underdriven.

The H5studio supports the Mic Capsule System 3.0 for easy and quick microphone swapping depending on the application and also offers two XLR/TRS combo inputs (with +48 V) and a mini-jack input with plug-in power. As a USB audio interface with four inputs and two outputs, it works seamlessly with Mac, Windows, iOS, and Android, including live streaming and microSD backup, demonstrating Zoom's years of experience in this field.

Also worth mentioning are the accessibility features, including audible menu navigation, sync functions via the iOS app, and an optional timecode module. The power supply is long-lasting: four AA batteries allow for up to 15 hours of recording.

Practical impressions

In interview situations, the H5studio scores highly with its finely graduated gain controls and clear level display; rapid peaks are cleanly absorbed by the look-ahead limiter without audible pumping. The 32-bit float reserves save takes when interviewees suddenly become louder or an unexpected noise disrupts the scene. For ambient and nature recordings, the large capsules deliver a pleasantly low self-noise and a well-defined stereo width; however, a windscreen is a must. With a simple foam windscreen, it remains usable in light breezes; for coastal or urban winds, a furry windjammer or a small blimp solution is recommended.

The Capsule System 3.0 offers true flexibility – from the XY stereo image for Music and ambience, mid/side for subsequent width adjustment, and shotgun options for dialogue-heavy scenes. The switching mechanism appears robust, and the locking mechanism is secure. Combined with the optional timecode module and app sync, this creates a surprisingly coherent setup for one-person crews: record sound, set markers, maintain metadata, and later synchronize cleanly.

Conclusion

The H5studio combines the portability of a field recorder with studio-quality features thanks to its high-quality F-Series preamps, 32-bit float technology, RF shielding against noise, and six tracks. Its large microphones, precise level control (gain control, look-ahead limiter), and versatility as an interface are particularly noteworthy.

The H5studio is not only suitable for reportage, film, and podcasts, but also for content creators and musicians/bands, whether outdoors, in the recording studio, rehearsal room, or on stage. Noise and clipping were not an issue in our tests, and thanks to its modular capsule architecture, the field recorder was adept at any recording situation. Anyone looking to record studio-quality sound on the move will find the H5studio a reliable partner for creativity anywhere. The only thing I didn't like so much was the rather plasticky housing; I would have preferred a bit more of a feel in the hand.

In addition, without adequate wind protection, you won't fully utilize the potential of the large capsules outdoors; with fur and, if necessary, a shock mount, however, the recorder shines – and its 32-bit float security quickly becomes a favorite insurance policy for every take.r

More on the topic

sE Electronics

sE7 sidefire

The Se7 Sidefire microphone is a small-diaphragm condenser microphone based on the sE7, which we highly recommend. The key difference is the side-firing design for versatile setup options, which, given its relatively affordable price and compact size, makes it a useful addition to any desktop studio.

The compact housing is solidly built, the controls are firmly in place and give the feeling that this microphone
It can withstand long-term use even in intensive studio use. Particularly striking is the side-firing design, which differs from traditional front-firing microphones and thus not only looks attractive but also offers advantages when positioning in tight setups.

In terms of sound, the Se7 Sidefire proves to be amazingly versatile. In the highs, it delivers a subtle brilliance that never sounds harsh, but rather creates an airy openness that's particularly effective with acoustic instruments like guitar or piano. The microphone also maintains a pleasantly restrained low-frequency quality, providing body and foundation without the tendency to drone. This allows for very close and direct pickup. The instruments are captured with a pleasant warmth that doesn't overly color, yet still imparts a certain musical softness. At the same time, the mid-range remains clear and detailed, conveying every nuance.

In studio use, the Sidefire's highly controlled polar pattern is also noticeable. Crosstalk is reliably reduced, which is a clear advantage in environments with multiple instruments or stereo recordings with two microphones (available as a matched pair). For home recording situations, this means that usable results can be achieved even in rooms with less than perfect acoustic treatment.

Conclusion

The Se7 Sidefire delivers a clean, low-noise signal that's ideal for further processing. Whether paired with high-quality preamps or directly with an audio interface, the results in our tests were almost always impressive. Even with dynamic playing styles, such as percussive acoustic guitar parts, the microphone remained confident, capturing transients clearly without harshness.

Manufacturer:sE Electronics
Web:seelectronics.com
Distribution: Mega Audio
Price:149 euros

Evaluation:

BLACK LION AUDIO

Revolution
Evolution.

Revolution 14x16
14-In/16-Out USB-C Audio Interface mit Word Clock- und ADAT-Schnittstelle, Auteur-Preamps, sowie Headphone Mixer.

Vertrieb: AUDIOWERK www.audiowerk.eu info@audiowerk.eu https://www.blacklionaudio.de/revolution-14x16/

Test:Kurzweil K2061/K2088

Kurzweil has been a fixture in the keyboard world since the early 90s. With the new K20 series, the Americans are bringing their legendary VAST engine back into the spotlight – with new features and plenty of processing power. Fans are already cheering! What sets the "new" synths apart from other synths? We reveal it in our review...by Jan Wilking

Features

Synthesizer Workstation

K2061
(61-note synth action)

K2088 (88 Hammer-mechanical keys)

256-voice polyphony

VAST synthesis

KB3 ToneReal Organs

Kurzweil String Resonance

Virtual Analog Synthesis

Arpeggiator

Ribbon Controller

Facts

Manufacturer: Entertainment
Web:kurzweil.com
Distribution: Hyperactive
Price:2,199 euros K2061;
2,499 euros K2088

JFlexible sound engines
JModern sound
JGreat variety of sounds
JHigh polyphony
JFatar keyboard
JFlashPlay memory without Loading times
JLive performance tools
JAudio input
JFreely assignable joystick
nDeep editing requires training
nNo full-fledged Sampling like in the K2700

Processing:
Sound:
Price-performance:
In total:

Alternatives

Yamaha MODX
1249 euros
yamaha.com

Roland Phantom
1229 euros
roland.com

Korg Nautilus
1699 euros
korg.com

The K2061 immediately strikes you as a typical Kurzweil: robust, high-quality, and unfussy. The case is made of aluminum and steel and is roadworthy without being too heavy or bulky. The semi-weighted Fatar TP/9 keyboard offers velocity and aftertouch. It plays directly, has a good grip, and is pleasantly tight, making it a successful compromise between piano and synth feel—for me personally, it's still one of the best synthesizer keyboards on the market. A more modern version with polyphonic aftertouch like the TP/8S would have been even better, given the versatile modulation options.

The control panel is clearly structured: nine faders, nine encoders, a large display, and the three-part ribbon controller make you want to perform. Add to that a pitch/mod wheel, pedal connectors, and a well-thought-out layout for live musicians.

Sound architecture:
VAST reloaded

At the heart of the K2061 is the VAST (Variable Architecture Synthesis Technology) engine, which has been Kurzweil's trademark since the K2000. The engine has been massively expanded over time. 32 layers per program enable extreme sound density. and 256 voices of polyphony are sufficient even for complex layered sounds without cut notes.

The sound generation offers several synthesis forms: VAST with flexible DSP algorithms, FM synthesis (6 operators, DX7 compatible, including SysEx import), VA1 engine for virtual analog sounds with anti-aliasing oscillators, and KB3 organ engine with nine real drawbar faders.

Almost unlimited Possibilities

This complex sound generation with its interconnected syntheses offers almost unlimited possibilities, which can only be hinted at in this review. Things get interesting, for example, when you mix the syntheses: Want to quickly mix an FM layer with VA pads, samples, and organ? No problem. With 32 layers, you can create complex, vibrant sounds. Or you can use FM cleverly by loading classic DX7 patches at the FM level and using their modulations as input for the VAST DSP – this creates lively, harmonically rich sounds that go far beyond standard FM. With the CC step sequencer, you can modulate filters, delays, or reverbs, and synchronize rhythmic progressions with your song tempo for dynamic textures. You can Additionally, you can use the long ribbon controller creatively, e.g., to control filter envelopes, lo-fi modulation, or organic pitch bends – it's more flexible than classic wheels.

Sound quality

The sound of the K2061 is typical Kurzweil: warm, assertive, and rich in detail. You could even call it a classic American sound, although the differences to the sound of Japanese workstations from Korg or Roland are no longer as obvious as they once were. The presets cover all the important categories, from powerful synth leads and buttery-smooth pads to realistic-sounding pianos, electric pianos, and organs. The pianos and electric pianos are powerful and rich in nuance, making them ideal for live performances. The organs are a real highlight thanks to the KB3 engine, including an authentic rotary effect. The synthesizer sounds are my personal favorite: modern, versatile, and very "analog" with their VA character. The successful sound design by Stephane Garganigo (Barb&Co.) is clearly evident here. The FM sounds are also of a high standard: crisp basses and crystal-clear leads and pads are plentiful, and you can also directly import the thousands of DX7 programs freely available online.

The menu is operated via the color display (without touch) and the corresponding buttons/controls.

The faders and knobs provide direct access to the sounds and effects.

Overall, the K2061 impresses with a very modern, contemporary sound and sounds less dated than some workstation competitors, as you can clearly hear in the video linked below! The electronic sounds, in particular, are on par with even highly specialized synthesizers. Another particularly positive feature is that the sound remains stable even with extreme layering – the 256-voice polyphony delivers on its promise.

Storage & Workflow

What is immediately noticeable in practical use: Kurzweil's FlashPlay technology allows instant access to the sounds; there are no noticeable loading times when switching. Of the 4 GB of total memory, 2 GB are factory sounds (over 2000 presets, 500 multis) and 2 GB are user sample memory (WAV, AIFF, Kurzweil formats).

In multimode, you can set up up to 16 zones, each with its own arpeggiator, riff generator, and step sequencer. There's also a 16-track sequencer that not only captures ideas but also functions as a live performance tool.

The combination of dark grey metal and wood application ensures a elegant and timeless design.

Effects

The K2061 doesn't skimp on effects either. You can use up to 32 effects processors simultaneously, giving you access to over 1,000 effect presets. They range from classic reverbs and thick delays to modern modulation gimmicks, but are primarily designed for conventional musical applications and are therefore directly usable for any musical purpose. For more extreme effects, however, you'll have to get your hands dirty.

For adjusting the overall sound, there's a master section with a 3-band EQ and compressor. This allows you to not only refine each sound individually, but also create a complete live mix directly on the keyboard.

Operation & Practice

Despite its enormous depth, the K2061 is comparatively accessible. The menu system is logically structured, and the knobs and faders are clearly assigned. However, in-depth editing of the VAST engine remains complex. Those who delve into the depths of the multiple layers require patience and experience – but that can also be the appeal for sound designers! You can rest assured that the K2061 does not get boring after years of use and still offers sonic surprises.

For more convenient working, Kurzweil offers software editors for Windows, macOS and iOS.

Connections

The unit features everything you'd typically need for live performances and studio recordings: two stereo outputs and a headphone output, audio input (for processing external signals), USB MIDI and standard MIDI in/out, and several pedal connections. Optional memory and editor access is also possible via USB. Direct connection to analog equipment via CV/Gate or clock is not supported.

K2088: Piano version with aftertouch

The new K20 series includes the K2061 and the K2088 model. Both keyboards share an identical sound and control concept and design, the key difference being the keyboard. Instead of the 61-key semi-weighted keyboard, pianists among you get a fully weighted piano keyboard with hammer action. As a unique feature for a piano keyboard, the Fatar TP/40L also offers aftertouch, further expanding the expressive possibilities while playing.

Naturally, this makes the K2088 significantly larger and heavier, so you'd need two people to carry it. The K2061 has the advantage here. Besides its more compact size and lighter weight, its keyboard offers a more agile and easier playability, making it ideal for keyboardists who play a lot of synth sounds, fast sequences, basslines, or even drum grooves, and who often use the keyboard without roadies.

Take it to gigs or rehearsal rooms. The weighted hammer action of the K2088, on the other hand, conveys an authentic piano playing feel and is particularly suitable for pianists and classically oriented musicians. If you've been wanting to integrate a "real" piano keyboard into your studio, this lets you kill two birds with one stone. For a workstation with an 88-key piano keyboard, the K2088 is relatively compact and also looks very stylish!

Both models are otherwise almost identical in terms of sound and functionality – so your choice depends primarily on your preferred playing feel and location.

In practical use

I really liked the keyboards in practice. It's the combination of tradition and modernity that sets the new Kurzweil keyboards apart from other workstations. The legendary VAST architecture has been refined over decades to deliver a standalone sonic tool with modern performance hardware and a powerful feature set. This is also reflected in the design: A robust aluminum/steel housing, a 480 x 272 pixel color LCD, and a massive arsenal of controllers give the keyboards a timeless, professional design.

Even though Kurzweil delivers a ton of great sounds and can be used as a classic bread-and-butter preset workstation, I see its unique selling point in its usability as a serious creative tool. Anyone willing to delve into the depth of the VAST architecture

Those who embrace this approach will be rewarded with an instrument that knows almost no limits. This makes the K2061 a powerful tool for live keyboardists, studio producers, and sound designers alike.

Who are the keyboards particularly suitable for?

Finally, a short list of the areas of application in which K2061 and K2088 offer the most advantages in my opinion:

1. Sound Design & Studio Expeditions
VAST synthesis, 32 layers per program, FM, VA and sampling engines as well as extensive effects enable complex soundscapes – ideal for film, ambient, post-production or experimental sound design.

2. Live Performances & Gigging
Thanks to FlashPlay with no loading times, fast program changes, and plenty of controllers including a ribbon, the synthesizer workstations are solid live instruments, especially in the compact and more travel-friendly 61-key format.

3. Composers & Band Keyboarders
The multitimbrality with 16 zones, arpeggiators, sequencers, and riff generators offer creative possibilities for structuring songs in the studio and/or on stage.

4. Vintage fans & nostalgics
Those who appreciate the classic sounds of K2000–K2700 will find them here – including DX7 compatibility and KB3 organ with realistic drawbar simulation

Both models in comparison

The back panel offers USB, MIDI, pedal inputs, audio outputs and audio input.

Free apps for Windows, MacOS and iOS make in-depth programming easier.

With a street price of around €2,200, the K2061 is positioned in the higher-priced segment, but is more affordable than the larger K2700. For those who don't need the flagship's full sampling integration, this is an extremely powerful and portable alternative.

More on the topic

CONCLUSION

The Kurzweil K2061 and K2088 aren't copies of classic Japanese workstations, and in my opinion, they're not direct competitors to the Nord keyboards, which are specifically designed for live and band use. Rather, they're standalone all-round synthesizers. Kurzweil combines various powerful synthesis forms and playability in a package that's equally recommended for sound designers, live musicians, composers, and vintage enthusiasts. The new Kurzweil keyboards share the strengths of the VAST philosophy, but appear more compact, sophisticated, and accessible than a K2700.

While the path to sound design requires some familiarization, as the VAST architecture remains complex, this is rewarded with enormous flexibility and inspiration. Anyone willing to overcome this hurdle will receive a robust tool that is technically sound, creatively rich, and a reliable and future-proof companion for many applications.r

Test:Behringer MS-5

With the MS-5, Behringer is once again resurrecting a vintage synthesizer at an affordable price. We tested whether Behringer has managed to bring the special character of the now half-century-old Roland SH-5 into the modern age.by Jan Wilking

The model for the MS-5 is a comparatively rare and nowadays very expensive mono synth from 1976, whose unusual sound generation structure with ring modulator and dual filter section enables expressive lead sounds and assertive basses as well as unusual FX sounds.

The Roland SH-5 is a classic with a vast sonic spectrum, ideal for experimental sounds, wiry basses, and expressive leads. This monophonic analog synthesizer from 1976 is considered one of the most versatile and best-sounding representatives of the Roland SH series. It features two oscillators (with various waveforms), a sub-oscillator, and a noise generator. Its dual filter system is particularly notable: a resonant multimode filter (bandpass/highpass) combined with a 24 dB low-pass filter, allowing for more complex tones than most other vintage monosynths. Modulation is also extensive, thanks to two LFOs, a ring modulator, and sample & hold. and flexible routing matrix turned out to be quite versatile in comparison.

Rare collector's item

The inherently powerful, warm, and organic sound, thanks to its special circuitry, also offers a dirtier and more flexible sonic character compared to the more popular SH-2 or SH-09, or the famous SH-101. Due to its low production numbers, the SH-5 is now a sought-after collector's item and commands very high prices on the used market. However, since this might be a dealbreaker for some readers, a warning at the beginning of this review: Like the original, the replica does not have the ability to save sounds!

Chic but chunky vintage design

After Behringer recently focused on desktop devices or compact keyboards with 49/61 keys, the MS-5 reuses the housing of the Poly D and MonoPoly. The synthesizer looks impressive right out of the box. No expense has been spared on space or weight. The housing is made largely of metal, making it very robust, but also weighing over 10 kilograms. With dimensions of 648 x 361 x 90 mm, the synthesizer also requires a considerable amount of space in the studio and isn't easy to transport, even with the panel folded away. Once assembled, you can also fold up the control surface for easier operation.

Average feel

I honestly really like the vintage design, but unfortunately, the controls don't live up to the high standards of the case. The plastic knobs, and especially the switches, seem a bit fragile in comparison and not suitable for long-term live performance. However, they're adequate for the studio, though you have to keep in mind the affordable price of currently under €400. The same applies to the keyboard and the controllers to the left, which I'm very happy with.

Features

- Monophonic synthesizer
- Analog sound generation
- Reproduction of the Roland SH-5
- 37 velocity-sensitive Keys
- 2 oscillators
- Multimode diode filter
- Bandpass filter with resonance
- Ring Modulator
- 71 controls
- foldable control panel

Facts

Manufacturer: Behringer
Web:
behringer.com
Distribution:specialist retailers
Price:395 euros

- JAuthentic SH-5-Sound
- JDirect access via many controls
- JAnalog ring modulator
- JFlexible filters
- JCreative routing
- JAudio input
- JAttractive price
- nOnly rudimentary MIDI control
- nSluggish AR envelope

Processing:
Sound:
Price-performance:
In total:

Alternatives

Novation Bass Station 2
399 euros
novationmusic.com

Arturia MiniBrute 2
489 euros
arturia.com

As with Poly D and Monopoly, the control unit can be used in the best Fold up towards the user in Minimoog style

can also only attest to average quality and feel.

So, I'm ambivalent about the form factor. While the MS-5 looks more impressive than the smaller desktop devices at first glance, it takes up unnecessary space and, due to its bulky casing, weight, and mediocre keyboard and controls, isn't really suitable for live performance.

Rudimentary MIDI control

The keyboard offers 37 keys and is velocity-sensitive. Unfortunately, this is only useful for external synthesizers, as the MS-5's sound engine can't handle velocity or aftertouch. Via USB/MIDI, the sound engine can only process pure notes. That's a bit too vintage for my taste. The power supply via an external power adapter is also less appealing; I would have preferred a built-in option. At least there's a locking hook to prevent accidental unplugging and cable breakage.

MIDI, USB and CV/Gate

The USB port transmits MIDI data in both directions and also provides connection to the free Synthtribe configuration software. With Synthtribe, you can perform firmware updates and adjust internal settings. Classic MIDI IN/OUT/THRU jacks are also available. For connecting to analog equipment/modular systems, there are CV/GATE inputs and outputs, a trigger input, and an audio input (for using the filter with an external audio signal). The stereo output is quite useless, as although the MS-5 has a panning control, this parameter is not modulatable without modification. The rear panel features four jack sockets for expression controllers, allowing you to externally modulate the VCF and VCO.

Completely analog, not storable

Like its predecessor, the SH-5, the sound generation is completely analog, with no digital sampling of the controls. The controls therefore do not send/receive MIDI controllers, and sounds cannot be saved. However, the parameters are truly infinitely variable, and the knobs and switches always reflect the currently audible sound.

On the underside of the foldable panel, you'll find various trimmers for adjusting the sound. However, this is best left to a professional with the appropriate measuring equipment and experience.

2 LFOs, Sample&Hold

The look and layout of the user interface are based on the original and follow the classic Roland synthesizer layout. On the left are the two LFOs and the sample/hold generator. All three modulation sources can be routed via switches to the pitches of VCO1 and VCO2, as well as the ring modulator, filter frequency, and amplifier, providing almost as much flexibility as a modular system. LFO2 can be delayed for classic vibrato effects.

Powerful oscillators

Next come the two oscillators, which form an extremely solid foundation with their robust and powerful sound. They are identically constructed and each offer triangle, sawtooth, and square waveforms (with fixed or modulated pulse widths). Synchronization between the two VCOs is possible, either with the well-known hard sync for piercing metallic sounds or the more rare soft sync, a weaker version. Hard sync sounds sound really good, with pleasant overtones and a powerful sound. For me personally, the weak version didn't offer much added value in terms of sound design, but that may be a matter of taste.

Ring modulator with great sound

And the next highlight follows directly: the ring modulator. I rarely use this effect in digital synthesizers and many modern analog synthesizers because it quickly leads to harsh and scratchy sounds that are unpleasant to my ears. However, it's different with the MS-5. Like the original, the ring modulator is a single sweet spot, no matter what you feed it. Slow

The classic vintage design is certainly an eye-catcher, but it also takes up a lot of space.

Whether it's LFO modulation, a noise generator (which produces pink or white noise), or audio modulation with both VCOs, the results always sound organic, interesting, and even unusual. It gets especially exciting when you select an external audio signal as the source and ring modulate it with VCO 1—a huge playground for sonic experimentation!

Flexible filter routing

And the best part is yet to come: the filter section! You get a first taste of what's to come in the mixer. Here, you use the five faders to control the volume of the noise generator, VCOs 1 and 2, the ring modulator, and the internal input. Additionally, you can individually select for each input whether it is sent through the multimode filter and/or the bandpass filter, or unfiltered to the amplifier. This offers a wealth of creative possibilities and is hardly inferior to (semi-)modular synthesizers. For example, you can send VCO 1 through the bandpass filter to create vocal-like sounds, which are often used in psy trance. In parallel, VCO 2 is sent through the multimode filter, while noise is passed through both filters, and the ring modulator is sent unfiltered to the VCA. Drones and FX sounds, in particular, benefit from the flexible routing. While the MS-5 is capable of producing classic synthesizer sounds, its strengths clearly lie in unusual signature sounds.

Bandpass and multimode filters

The bandpass filter offers controls for frequency, resonance, and level. Modulation is not possible, but the characteristic sound of this filter can certainly influence the sound of the

The second filter is significantly more flexible. It can operate as a low-pass, band-pass, or high-pass filter and is dynamically modulated via LFO, S/H, and envelope. It also has the unique, organic sound of vintage Roland filters; Behringer has captured this character really well. As with virtually all Behringer clones, the original sounds a bit richer, dirtier, and more powerful, but the differences aren't particularly significant, and the slightly clearer sound of the MS-5 cuts through even better in the mix.

Not an entry-level synthesizer

The VCOs, ring modulator, and filter are truly impressive in terms of sound. However, I was less impressed by the somewhat incomplete parameterization in some areas. Unfortunately, I didn't have an original for comparison, but the MS-5, at least overall, isn't a sweet spot synthesizer, nor is it necessarily the right synthesizer for beginners. You have to think a bit and do some tricks in many areas to achieve the desired musical result. This applies, for example, to the LFO and S/H control ranges, but also to the attack of the somewhat sluggish A/R envelope (for crisp attack/transients, you have to reroute to the ADSR envelope).

Alternatives

If you are looking for the special features and sound character of the Roland SH-5, the MS-5 is the best alternative to the original.

However, if you're looking for a bit more flexibility in terms of sound, there are certainly alternatives in this affordable price range. The Novation Bass Station 2 costs about the same and also offers a comprehensive range of features. The synthesizer is also more compact and fully storable and MIDI-controllable.

MIDI and USB make it easier to integrate into a modern setup.

The bottom with folding mechanism and various trimmers for fine adjustment

and equipped with a sequencer/arpeggiator, but sounds a bit more modern and does not have the special sound character of the MS-5.

The same applies to the Moog Messenger, which is about twice as expensive and, in my opinion, is superior to both the MS-5 and Bass Station 2, especially in terms of design and feel. While the Bass Station 2's sound certainly leans toward Roland, the Messenger, unsurprisingly, sounds more like a Moog—it's a matter of personal taste. The Arturia MiniBrute 2 or Korg MS-20 mini are other alternatives in this price range, each with its own unique sound character and features. And Behringer's extensive portfolio also includes various analog mono synthesizers of all sizes and flavors, such as the Pro-1, Odyssey, or MonoPoly, or, of course, the Eurorack modules of the System-100, which sound quite close to the MS-5.

More on the topic

CONCLUSION

In terms of sound, Behringer has really captured the character of the SH-5. The oscillators sound powerful, raw, and lively, and the ring modulator and filter have the organic sound of the original. And thanks to the creative routing options, the MS-5 is also more sonically flexible than many other vintage synthesizers. Drones and FX sounds in particular benefit from this. While the MS-5 is fundamentally capable of classic synthesizer sounds: the basses have a solid foundation, leads bite, and the filter whistles with character at high resonance. But its strengths clearly lie in unusual signature sounds. However, the MS-5 is not a beginner's synthesizer, as the control ranges of some parameters are, in my opinion, not very useful or musically optimal. You'll achieve classic sounds faster with a Pro-1, Minimoog, or SH-101 (or replicas thereof). The bulky format combined with the mediocre quality of the keyboard and controllers won't appeal to everyone. Therefore, the MS-5 is especially interesting for those who want to integrate the special character sound of the SH-5 into their studio without having to spend a small fortune.r

Test:AlphaTheta Chordcat

To quickly create chord ideas, harmonic progressions, and groove sketches on the go or in the studio, AlphaTheta has released the compact Chordcat. How the sequencer performs in practice

You can find out more in the test here.by Carl-Philipp Schmeller

Features

- mobile chord groovebox
- 8-track sequencer
- 16 patterns per track
- 145 sound presets
- 16 drum kits
- 16 step buttons
- XY touchpad
- 3 built-in effects
- USB-C & MIDI I/O
- Battery operation possible

Facts

Manufacturer: AlphaTheta
Web:alphatheta.com
Distribution:specialist retailers
Price:279 euros

- Jlarge selection of chords
- JStep sequencer
- J145 sounds
- JChord Cruiser Mode
- Jintuitive operation
- Jcompact shape
- nno sample import
- nEditing the sounds

Sound:
Operation:
Price-performance:
In total:

Alternatives

no

ChordCat's user interface provides quick access to all parameters.

It's not uncommon to find yourself sitting in the studio with a great beat, but unable to think of the right melody chords. But that's all over now, thanks to AlphaTheta's new compact chord engine, Chordcat. Key applications include desktop setups, DJ setups, and even live performances for mobile jam sessions.

Connections

In addition to the USB-C connection to a computer for power supply and MIDI/audio host functionality, the rear panel also features MIDI DIN ports and a stereo jack output. Thanks to the USB connection, ChordCat can also function as a MIDI controller. Incidentally, ChordCat can also be powered by six AAA batteries if needed.

Sounds & Step Sequencer

The left side of the user interface is reserved for the step sequencer with 16 buttons, while the creation of chord sequences takes place on the right half of the XY pad. The sound engine is based on an 8-track sequencer with 145 sounds and 16 drum kits from various musical genres. Each of these eight tracks can contain up to 16 tracks, and each pattern can last up to 128 steps (8 bars). To access the sound library, the Sound button must first be selected. The sounds include basses, grand pianos, house orchestras, and more.

There are also standard synthesizer lead sounds and pads, which can be navigated using the arrow keys next to the small display. For a first impression of the sounds, you can select complete demo projects using the Menu button and load them with the Enter key. The drum sounds are powerful, but cannot be individually edited. Unfortunately, exchanging or importing your own drums is also not possible. A dedicated editor would be desirable for this.

Chord Cruiser

The heart of the device, however, is the lower row of the control panel with the Chord Cruiser mode. When activated, several musically compatible chords are suggested on the XY pad, which can be heard immediately by lightly pressing it. Depending on which chord you like, you can assign it to the lower keyboard by holding it down. Up to 110,000 chord combinations can be generated, allowing you to quickly and intuitively create suitable arrangements. Switching between different chord sets is done using the arrow keys next to the small display. The chord sets include minor and major, as well as various music genres such as drum & bass, house, or pop. To program the desired chords and tracks, you must select the desired track using the track button and can then also play drums.

or other instruments on the step sequencer. Reverb can also be added to the lower row of 4 keys on the step sequencer.

Another nice feature is the ability to set different pattern reading directions for programming the step sequencer. This certainly boosts creativity and the workflow for new ideas.

XY pad

The XY pad can also be used to add more variety to the melodies you've created with the Apeggiator. You can also add more spatiality to the sound with the Delay. You can add more movement to your tracks with the Ducker, which is also controlled via the XY pad. Last but not least, you can adjust the volume and pan on the step sequencer while holding down a note on the XY pad, as well as transpose the pitch up and down for each note.

Conclusion

ChordCat's focus is clearly on composition. As a composition tool or song starter for on the go, Chordcat is a very useful production and inspirational aid. It's astonishing how quickly and easily you can conjure up harmonies and chords with the Chord Cruiser. Those with little or no knowledge of chord composition and harmony theory can quickly achieve success with suitable chord suggestions. However, the chord engine is no substitute for a full studio setup; there are no sampling options or editing options for sound design.r

More on the topic

OMNITRONIC

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Analoger Rotary-Mixer mit 3-Band-Masterfrequenzisolator

- VU-Meter für jeden Kanal
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- Regelbarer Send-Return-Effektweg
- Regelbarer Record-Out

Live & DJ Gear News

On Stage

by Carl-Philipp Schmeller

7-inch vinyl

DJ turntable system

With the RP-7, Reloop presents the first mass-produced DJ turntable system specifically designed for 7" vinyl. As a tribute to the 45 rpm culture, it combines high-end technology with a compact format. The RP-7 features a newly developed, brushless DC motor with 2.5 kg/cm torque, enabling precise cueing, minimal "wow & flutter," and scratching techniques. The die-cast aluminum turntable and an integrated switching power supply ensure stability and trouble-free operation. The straight copper tonearm with rubber damping guarantees tracking accuracy, while the statically balanced system eliminates anti-skating. For DJs, the player offers three speeds (33⅓, 45, and 78 RPM), pitch ranges of ±8, ±16, and ±35%, a pitch reset button, and a removable LED needle illumination. Switchable phono/line outputs with gold-plated jacks facilitate setup integration.

The robust RP-7, designed in a sophisticated jet black metallic finish, is available for 549 euros and is likely to appeal primarily to collectors, vinyl enthusiasts, and professional DJs.

More on the topic

reloop.com

One-ear monitoring

Headphones for DJs

The RHP-10 Mono is a new headphone for DJs from Reloop, which has only one earpiece for one ear

It features 50mm neodymium drivers and delivers dynamic sound with a kick-bass emphasis. This allows for precise monitoring in noisy environments. The model covers a frequency range of 30 Hz–30 kHz. Even without a second earpiece, the headphones can be comfortably positioned on the shoulder or head and are always within easy reach for quick cueing. The maximum input power is 300 mW and the impedance is 24 ohms. Long-term wearing comfort is thanks to the ergonomically padded handle, the pivoting headphone attachment, and softly padded, water-resistant veggie leather ear cushions that prevent fatigue. The headphones thus aim to impress with their flat and lightweight comfort construction. The accompanying carrying case is made of the same material as the ear cushions. The connection is via an XLR connector plus an adapter to a 6.3mm jack.

The neon-designed RHP-10 Mono is now available in specialist stores for 69 euros.

More on the topic

reloop.com

DJ controller with motorized turntables for stem mixing

The new DJ controller One MKII from Rane, which has finally been released in stores, promises pure vinyl feeling. One of the most important innovations is the Stems function, which allows For example, you can extract a cappella vocal tracks from a song or create instrumental versions. This is ideal for live remixes and mash-ups. These stems can be accessed via the Performance Pads modes and above the jog wheel. The Performance Pads can also be used to set hot cues, loops, and rolls, as well as trigger samples.

The 2-channel controller finally has effects, a whopping 29 plus Serato software effects. Serato is also the DJ software that comes with the One MKII compatible. Thanks to the high-torque motorization of the 7.2-inch turntable platter, a true vinyl feel is achieved. The start/stop button is also designed in turntable style. The Rane One MKII, shining in white, is available now. cash and can can be purchased from 1549 euros.

More on the topic

rane.com

Power Producer: Ableton Push

Complex chords without layering

Creating atmospheric density is often very time-consuming – but with the newly added Chord oscillator type in Meld, it's done in no time. Complete chords emerge from just a single note, which can be expanded into vibrant, multi-layered soundscapes with just a few simple settings and alternative tunings. You'll learn how in this workshop.by Maya C. Sternel

Project information

Material: Ableton Live 12.2, Push 3
Time required:30 minutes
Contents: Create complex, lively-sounding chord sequences from a single note, compress the chord using various parameters of the Meld Synth, and add atmospheric spatial depth.
Difficulty: Advanced

1 Select oscillator type

To create complex chords from a simple note, load the Meld Synth's standard preset. Program a short sequence of one-bar MIDI notes. In the Push main menu, set**Osc. A Type**on Chord. To give the sound character, change**Shape**and **inversion**.**Shape**defines the interval width, **inversion**the distribution of chord tones.1

2 Create chord

Set**Shape**to 20 and**inversion**to 60. Activate Use Scale in the Settings menu to always stay in the correct tonal range. Use the Push option, available with the Live 12.2 update, to directly access the tuning systems. This allows you to generate exciting timbres. To access the tuning system selection, press the Scale button.1

3 Tuning Library

At the top right of the display you will see the**+ Tunings**Press the button above. This opens the tuning library, which gives you access to both pure tunings and exotic variations. Try out different tunings. This will give your chords a completely different harmonic character.1

4 Deform LFO

If you press the button in the bottom right corner under Reset, the tuning will be reset to our usual equal temper system. Next, we'll modulate the Meld's chord sound. To do this, go to the LFO1 menu and select FX1.**Effect 1 Type** Scrambler. To enable the LFO to modulate the filter frequency, go to the Filters menu.1

5 Assign modulation target

Hold the potentiometer over**Filter A Frequency** while pressing the button over **Add to Matrix**The display then switches to the matrix view. Set**LFO1 FX**to 40. Go back to the LFO1 menu and select**Permute**a value of 60. Depending on the selected value, the rhythmic movement in the chord sound changes.1

6 Atmospheric expanse

To add more depth to the sound, go to the Osc menu, select**Osc B**and set**Octave**on**-1 Oct**To change the timbre, vary**Shape**e.g. to 54. In the Mix menu, adjust the volume of**Osc. B**above**B Volume**Give the sound more width by selecting the Global/Out**Spread Office**to 60%. Now load a hybrid reverb behind it.r

Music treasures of the month

compiled by Sascha Blach

HAAi: HUMANiSE

The opener “Satellite,” created in collaboration with Jon Hopkins, Obi Franky, and the Trans Voices Choir and their conductor, introduces the second HAAi album in an experimental way – including elements of glitch, 90s rave, and 2-step. The track also continues to challenge The London-based Australian continues to challenge us. In her colorful mix of styles, encompassing electro, house, techno, pop, hip-hop, and experimental, unusual structures and sounds set the tone, and Teneil Throssell—her real name—also knows how to showcase her voice in an interesting way. Contrary to the album title, "HU-MANiSE," the record is a predominantly electronic work with a mechanical charm that also strongly influences or alienates the human aspects, such as the vocals. Often elusive, but also consistently fascinating—"HUMANiSE" isn't easy listening, but it's guaranteed to be unique.

Genre: Electro, Pop, Experimental | Label: Mute

Monolink: The Beauty Of It All

Berlin-based Monolink demonstrates on his third album how sophisticated, contemporary electro-pop can sound. Steffen Linck – his real name – is convincing not only in terms of sound design, but also as a songwriter: His tracks combine the Hypnotic and danceable electronic music with classic pop songwriting that culminates in catchy hooks and coherent lyrics. In addition to synths and drum machines, fueled by house, techno, and electronica influences, he occasionally turns to the acoustic guitar to color his consistently melancholic pieces with folk elements. Created during solitary hours in the countryside, "The Beauty Of It All" is a thoughtful, profound album with crystal-clear production that lives up to its title: It's simply beautiful.

Genre: Electronica | Label: Embassy Of Music

Rotersand: Don't Become The Thing You Hated

Five years after “How Do You Feel Today?” Rotersand advise their fans to “Don't Become The Thing You Hated”, and this recommendation goes hand in hand with a nice mix of dancefloor-ready, fatly produced electro-stompers, ballad-like ambient spheres and melancholic Vibes. The German duo Rascal Nikov (vocals) and Krischan Wesenberg (instruments, production) continue to represent an exciting mix of future/electro pop, EBM, and techno. Unlike many other electronic bands, however, the focus here is always on the song rather than the beats, and production finesse, as well as the soulful, multi-layered vocals, add depth to the work. Songs like "Higher Ground," "Sexiness Of Slow," and "16 Devils – Hell Deep Down" are recommended listens for an album that is a must-listen for fans of everything from VNV Nation to Covenant!

Genre: Electro | Label: Trisol

SYZYGYX: Sinner

US artist Luna Blanc, the sole ruler of SYZYGYX, has a penchant for dark electronic music. Her music combines elements of EBM, electro-punk, dark wave, industrial, and synth-pop into a seductive A cocktail of sounds that feels distant and cool, yet captivating. '80s influences repeatedly shine through in the soundscape, which thrives on old-school synths and drum machines and gives ample space to the deep, warm, often reverberated voice of the protagonist. Whether aggressively whipping, clubby and rousing, or darkly lascivious, "Sinner" covers a broad spectrum of emotions and appeals to multiple senses at once. Fans of the dark music scene are sure to find something here.

Genre: Electro, Dark Wave | Label: Cold Transmission Music

Hammerschmidt: Sound Of The Underground

Some of you might know Chris Maico Schmidt as Mike S. – he is the co-founder of Evosonic Radio, where our monthly beat podcast also airs. He recently signed with Valhall Records with his project Hammerschmidt and is releasing "Sound Of The Underground" is the first result of the collaboration. The single contains four versions of the title track – in addition to the original, a Mike S. mix (his alter ego), and remixes by Michael Kohlbecker and Schremser. And these four tracks are something special: they offer hard, dark techno with an underground flair. Unfussy, driving, and relentless. It's the perfect music to turn up loud so the bass drives the neighbors crazy. DJs also have a safe bet – and we're excited to see what's next.

Genre: Techno | Label: Valhall Records

Niklas Paschburg: Mexican Alps

The piano is actually the main instrument of the German artist, who primarily works in neoclassical music. However, on this EP, he leaves the piano out completely for the first time. "Mexican Alps" is a spontaneous work between ambient and electronica, which Field recordings, drones, and synth improvisations are woven into an atmospheric nature soundtrack. While electronics isn't new territory for Paschburg, it's never been as clearly at the forefront as here. The eight tracks are characterized by experimental soundscapes, melancholic melodies, jazzy touches, modular synths, and analog delays. Created between Mexico and the Alps—hence the title—the EP is a wonderfully ethereal sonic journey that connects seemingly distant worlds.

Genre: Neoclassical, Ambient, Electronica | Label: Netwerk

Sudan Archives: The BPM

Behind Sudan Archives is the US singer, violinist and producer Brittney Denise Parks, who combines R&B and soul with electronic music in her music and adds an extra spark with her violin here and there. The project name Sudan Archives wasn't chosen by chance, as African culture also clearly influences her work, incorporating folkloric influences from countries like Sudan and Ghana. Her third album, "The BPM," has a more electronic flavor than its two predecessors—it was completed in Michigan and Detroit and influenced by the local club culture. It's also worth mentioning that the artist has taken her destiny more into her own hands than ever before, producing more of her own material and involving her family more closely. 15 tracks range from poppy R&B, club vibes, and exotic ingredients—mostly with brisk BPMs.

Genre: R&B | Label: Stones Throw

Verses GT: Verses GT

Verses GT is the duo of Jacques Greene and Nosaj Thing, both of whom have released solo works under their own names. Although the producers have been collaborating for many years, they have only now managed to create a joint album. London, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Paris and Montreal, the 10-tracker moves between downtempo, house, ambient and pop. It thrives on hypnotic beats, sometimes dark atmospheres and occasional appearances by guest singers such as and Tyson, which provide variety amidst the otherwise instrumental and consistently atmospheric soundscape. Highlights include "Your Light," a feature with George Riley, and the technoid-meditative "Left." The arrangements and instrumentation are deliberately stripped down to the essentials and exude tremendous depth thanks to the subtle production.

Genre: Electronica | Label: Luckyme

Your event planner for 2025/26

October 3, 2025 - October 4, 2025

Beatcon 25

Berlin, Germany

04.10.2025 - 04.10.2025

SynthFest UK

Sheffield, UK

October 14, 2025 - October 16, 2025

LEaTcon 25

Studioszene Hamburg Messe, DE

October 22, 2025 - October 26, 2025

Amsterdam Dance Event

Amsterdam, Netherlands

October 26-27, 2025

DJ Workshop Germany 2025

Romrod Castle

November 14, 2025 - November 15, 2025

Music Expo 25

San Francisco, US

November 28, 2025 - December 7, 2025

Black Friday & Cyber Monday Week

January 20, 2026 - January 24, 2026

NAMM Show

Anaheim, US

February 3, 2026 - February 6, 2026

ISE 2026

Barcelona, Spain

March 24, 2026 - March 26, 2026

Prolight + Sound

Frankfurt, Germany

June 18, 2026 - June 20, 2026

Sonar Festival 2026

Barcelona, Spain

Beat 12 -|- 2025
published on November 7, 2025

Hi-Hat Masterclass:Your top-end toolkit

Create crackling textures, rolling fills, and utilize the full stereo width to make your tracks stand out! We'll dive deep into the world of hi-hats and perfect the groove for your next beats, songs, and productions. This masterclass will show you how to choose the right hi-hat sound, perfectly showcase it, and shape your unmistakable groove with micro-rhythmic finesse. And watch out: As a Beat reader, you'll receive over 200 MIDI clips with hi-hat grooves for free!

Test:Sonicware Liven Evoke

A 4-track ambient synthesizer with a focus on cinematic and electro-acoustic sounds. It's based on the Acoustronic Flux Oscillator with acoustically inspired synthesis. It's complemented by a musical granular effect, synchronizable time stretching, and harmonization. Of course, it also features reverb and 16 chord modes for easy, one-button chord control for creating ambient pads and drones.

Interview:Soulwax

Since the '90s, Soulwax has been one of the most well-known names in the broad spectrum of indie and electronic music. With "All Systems Are Lying," the Belgian band led by brothers Stephen and David Dewaele is releasing their first new album in seven years, and we're naturally keenly interested in what went into the production process. You can read our interview in the next issue!

Photo: Nadine Fraczkowski

Test:Oberheim TEO-5 Desktop

The TEO-5 Desktop is anything but a slimmed-down version, even though it lacks a few of the controls, along with the keyboard. In addition to classic Oberheim elements like the signature SEM multimode filter, it also includes a number of special features, including through-zero FM, a polyphonic sequencer, analog overdrive, and modulatable digital effects. We've tested the TEO-5 Desktop for you to see how it performs overall and in direct comparison to the Sequential OB-6 and Behringer UB-Xa.

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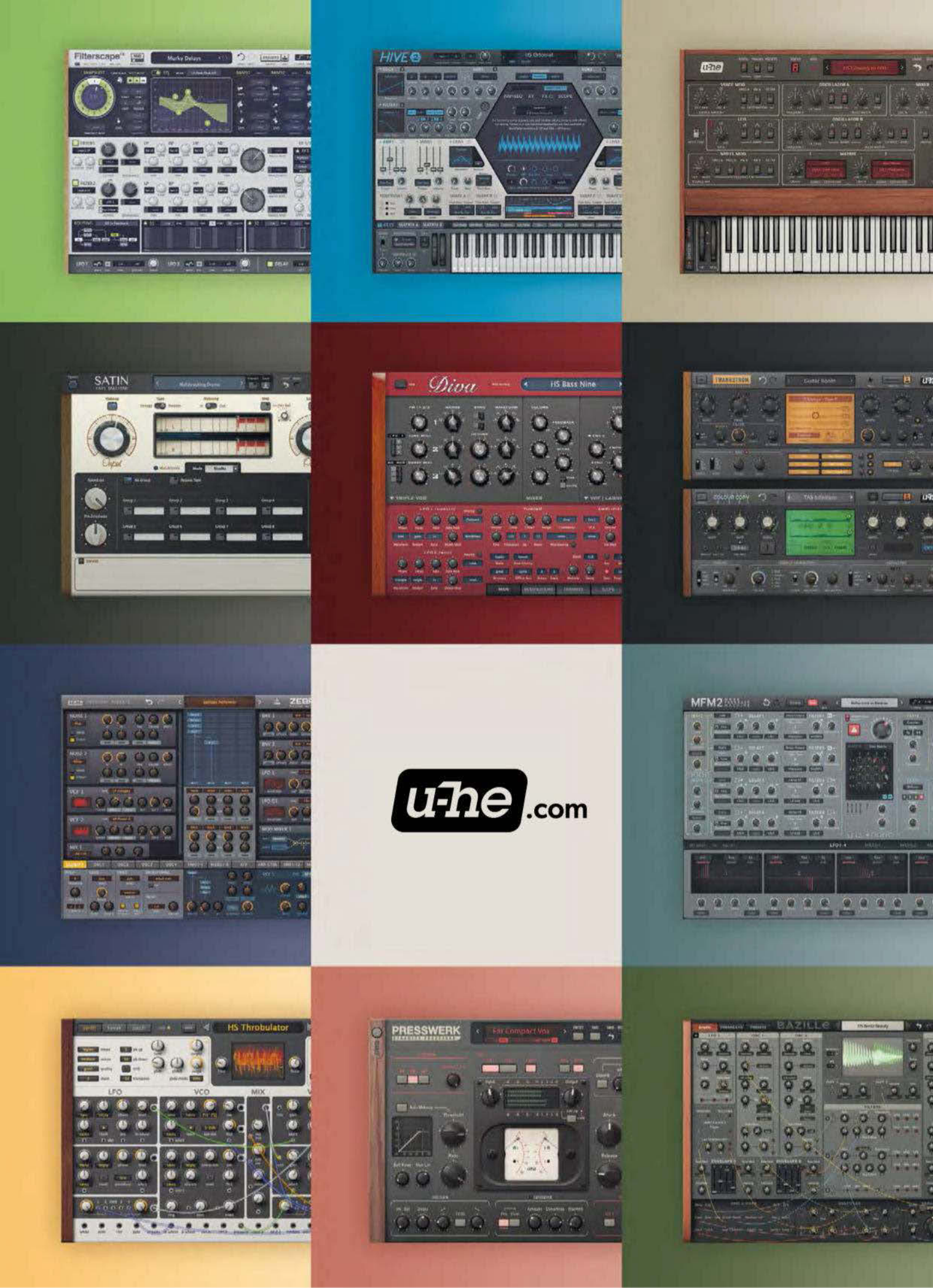
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Chordcat

8 - TRACKGROOVEBOX

Chord Cruiser Mode

Chordcat suggests several musically suitable chords to make music easily

Give your music a boost with 3 powerful

intuitive control via the XY pad

4x4 step sequence patterns between right, down, clockwise and counterclockwise and create new

Sound presets and tools for sound design

Let yourself be inspired by 145 sound presets and 16

Extensive workspace Add your music with up to 8 tracks,

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